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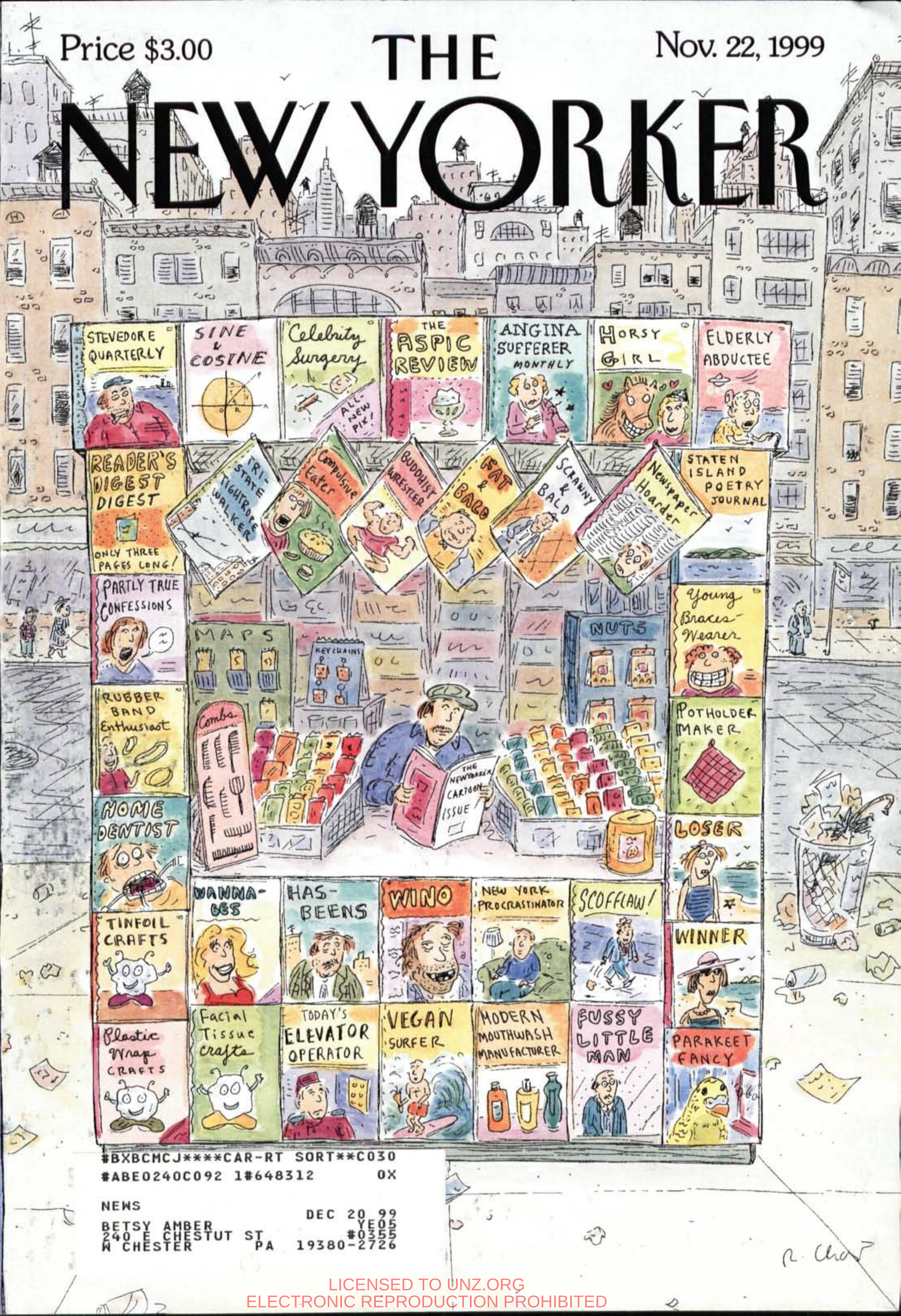
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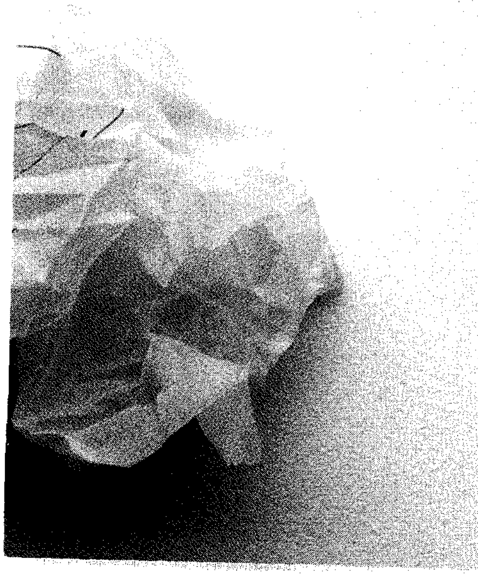

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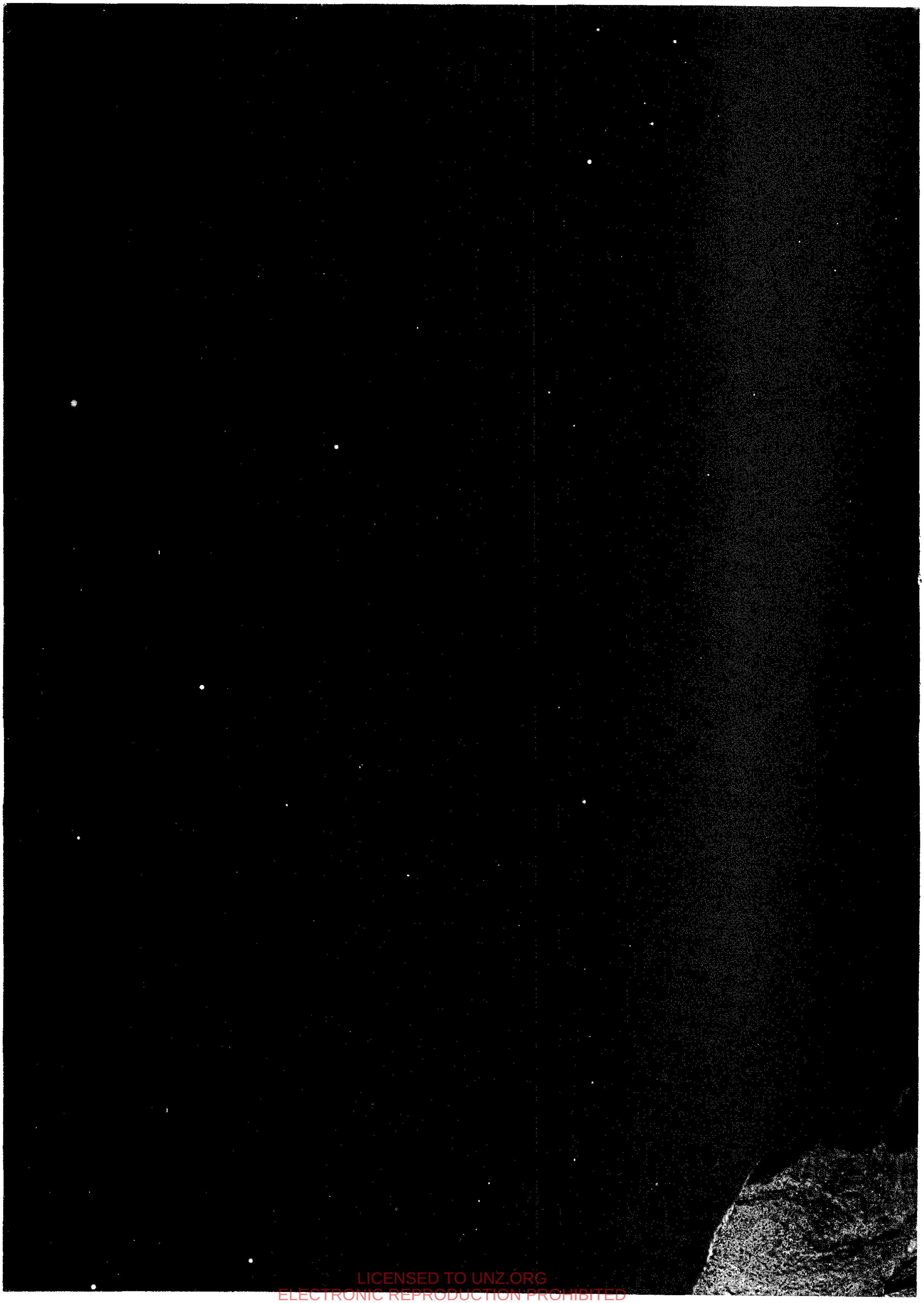

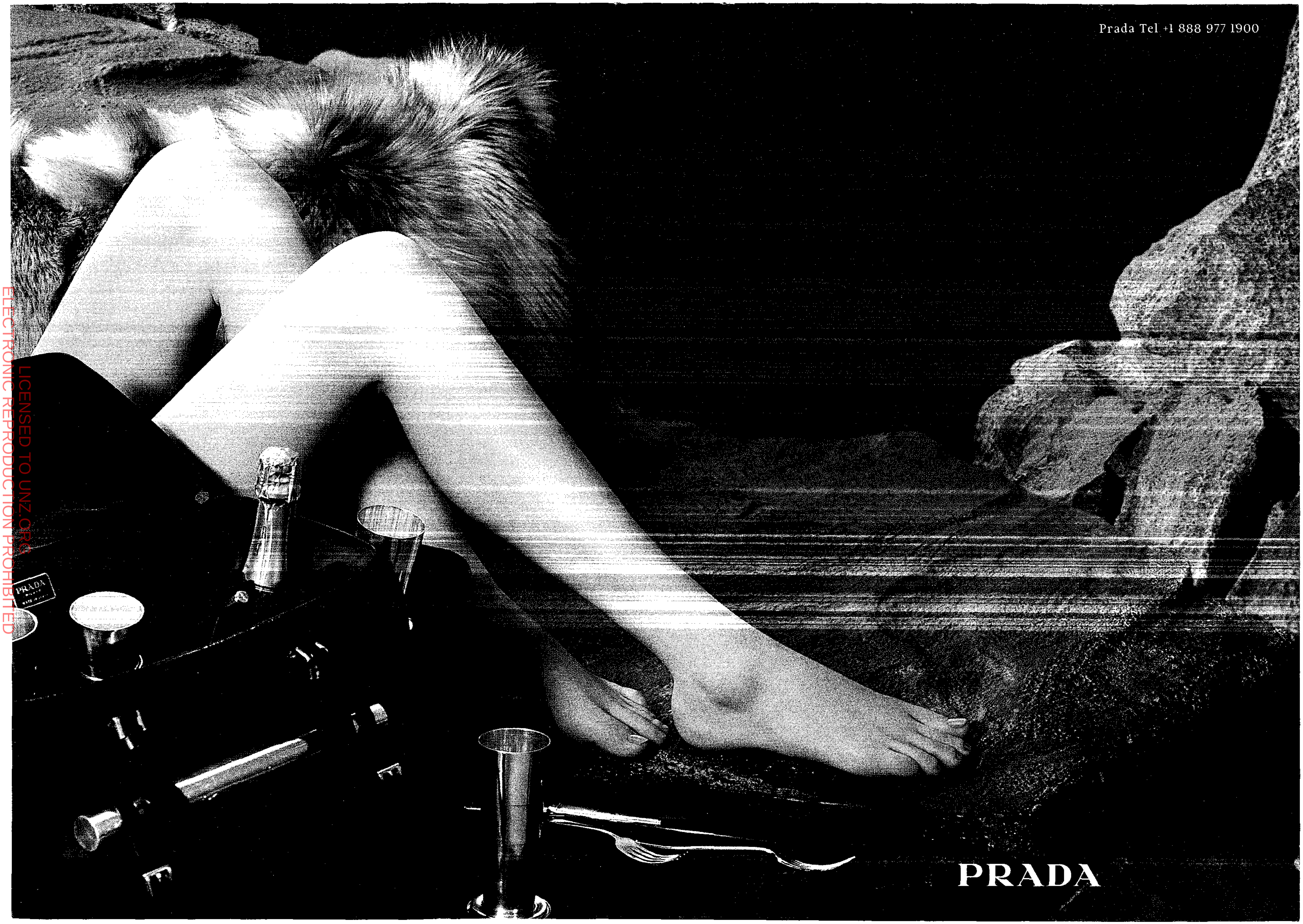
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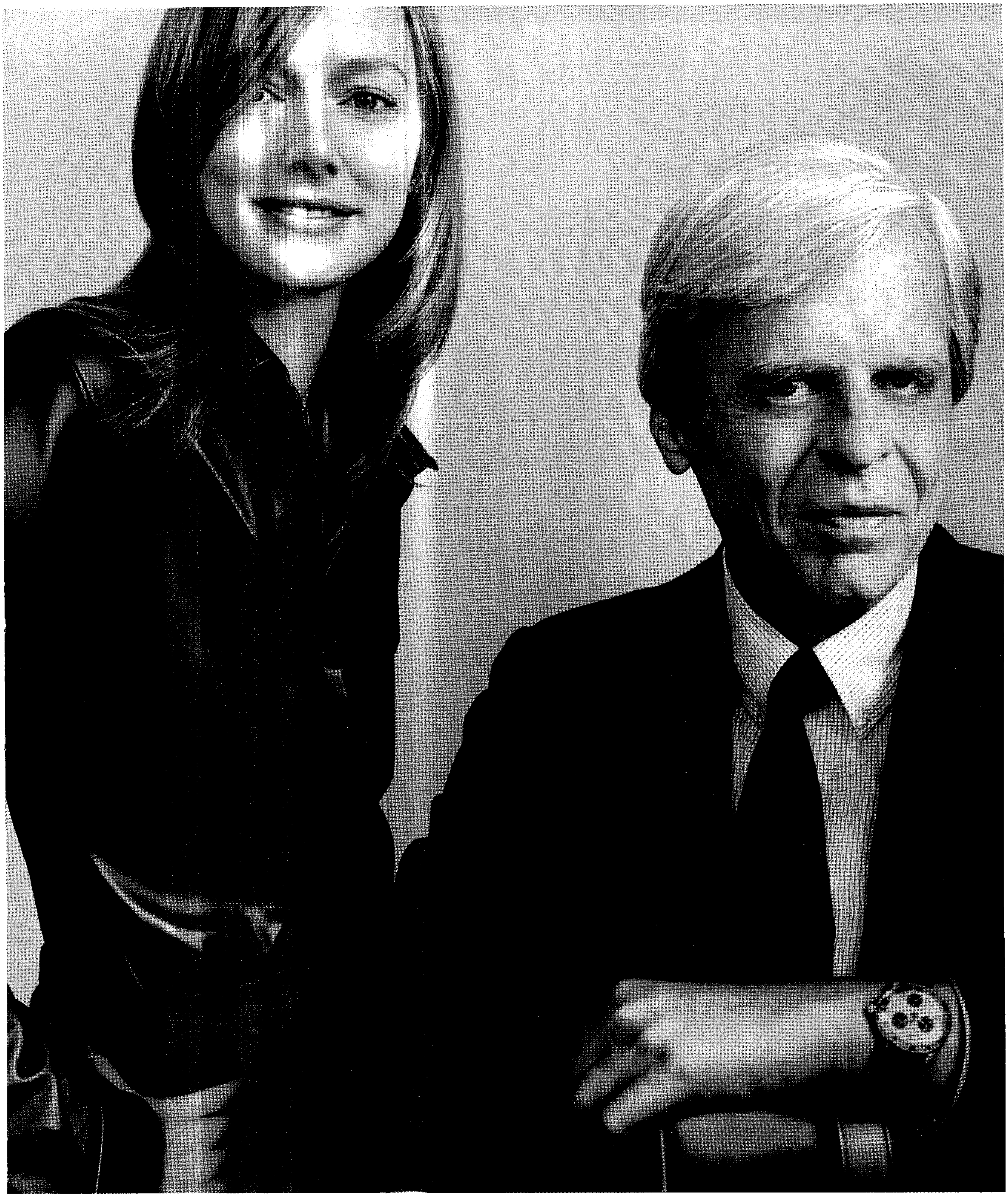
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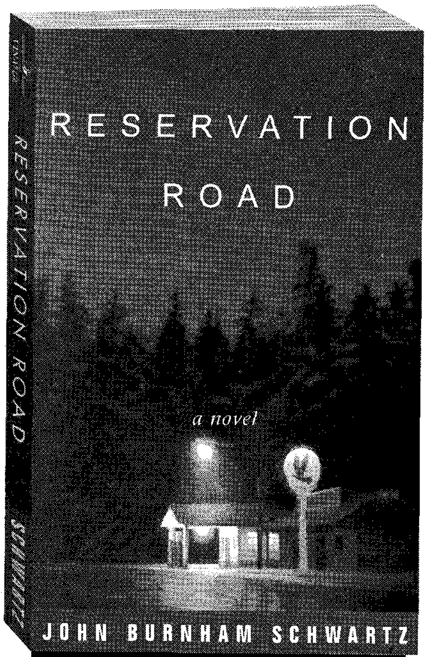

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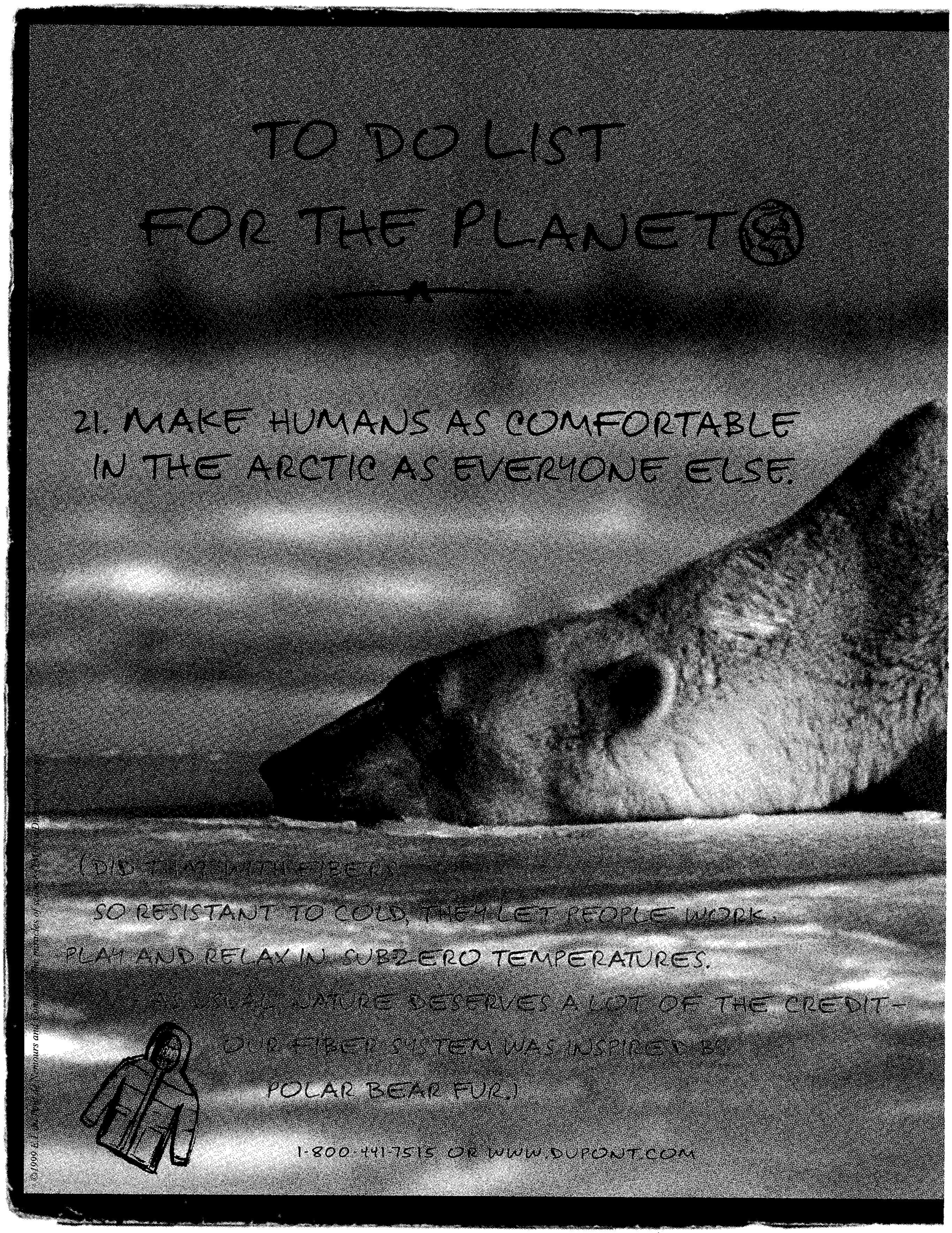

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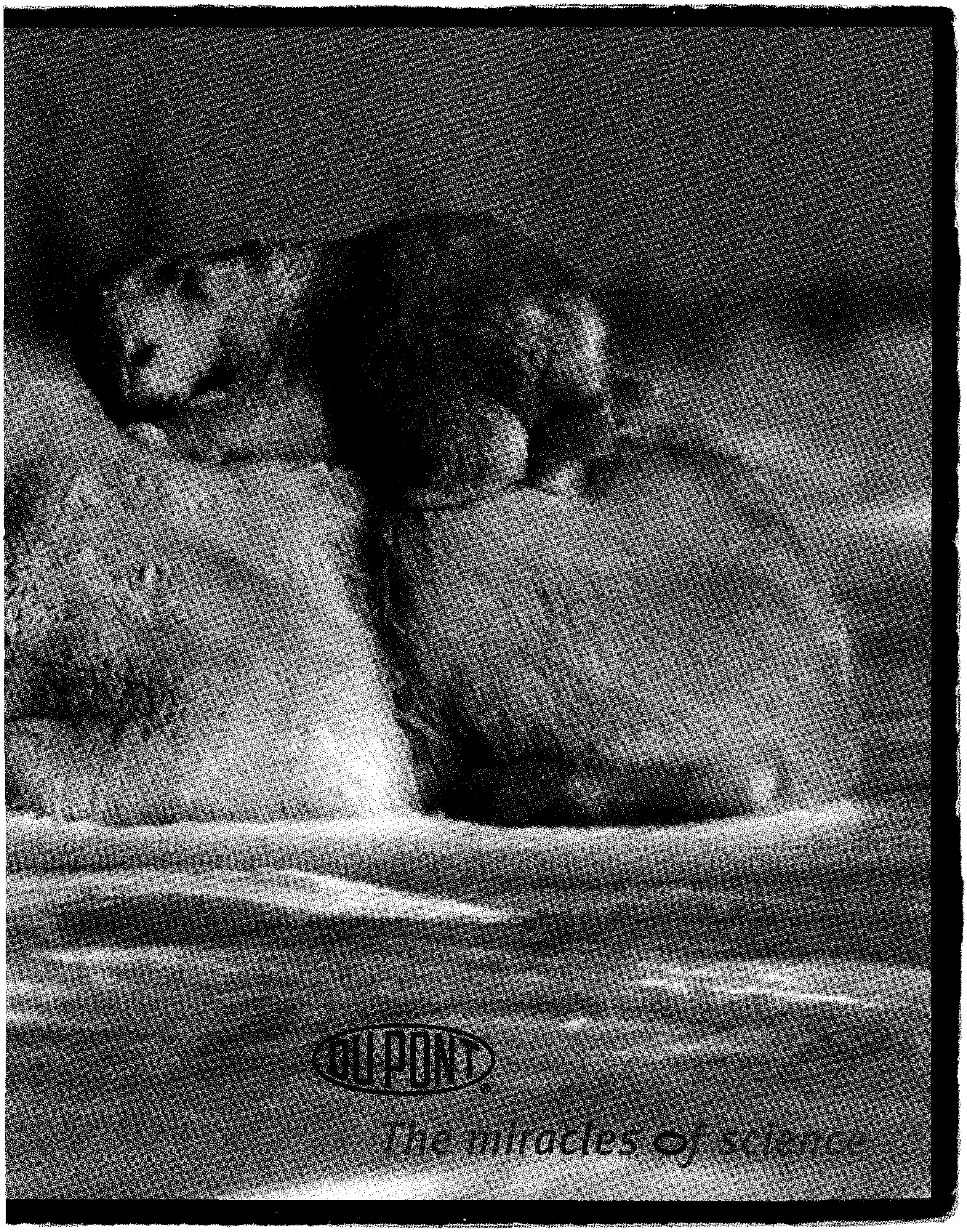
DU PONT
The miracles of science

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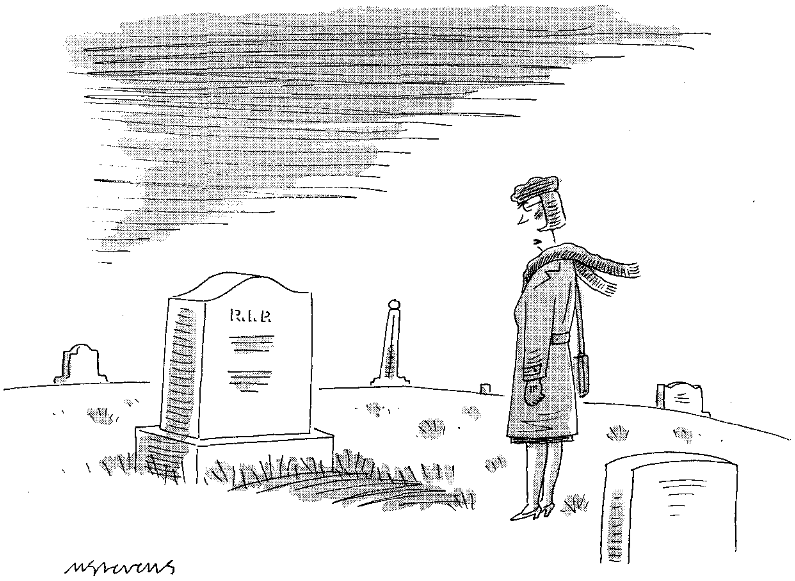

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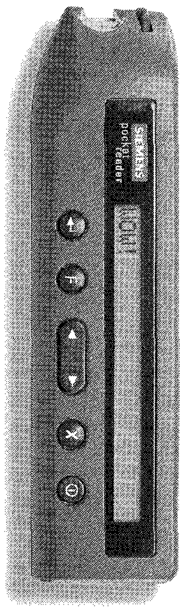

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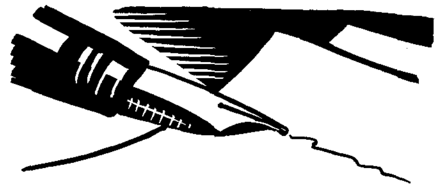

HOXBY'S REPORT CARD

Caroline Hoxby's economic analyses of education ("Schools Are Her Business," by John Cassidy, October 18th & 25th) are based on assumptions that simply do not hold in the real world. The theory behind school choice and vouchers—that in an educational free market schools will be forced to improve in order to attract students—assumes that families will attempt to and will be capable of choosing a school that will provide the maximum amount of learning for their children. This is like arguing that the free market in restaurants should result in people maximizing their meals' nutritional quality. But people often choose their food for its taste, for the restaurant's convenient location, or for snob appeal. Many eat themselves into ill health.

Similarly, there is ample evidence that when choosing a school people often behave in ways not designed to maximize learning. Even in relatively advantaged communities, high-school students (presumably with parental approval) often opt out of the most difficult and challenging courses, and parents often pressure teachers to give less homework and assign higher grades. Hoxby herself admits that differences in families explain far more of the variance in educational outcomes than differences in schools. So what reason is there to believe that kids from disadvantaged families will be better off if we give their parents the power to control their educations?

MICKEY IMBER
Lawrence, Kans.

McKINSEY'S MYTHS

Nicholas Lemann does a thorough job of puncturing the mystique of the consulting business in general and of McKinsey in particular ("The Kids in the Conference Room," October 18th & 25th). But, when lamenting our educational system's complicity with our corporate meritocracy, Lemann doesn't contrast the United States with Europe, where most students are forced to choose a vocation much earlier and are penalized for changing their minds. Despite playing into the long tentacles of corporate recruiting, American college students still have unprecedented freedom to study the subjects that interest them.

DANIEL SAUL HOUSMAN
New York City

I used to be one of the McKinsey business analysts that Nicholas Lemann wrote about. Taking the obvious, irreproachable, risk-averse "next big step" after I graduated from Princeton was a mistake. I joined the Los Angeles office in September, 1998. Eight months later, I quit. In proper McKinsey fashion, I'd like to propose three reasons for my resignation: (1) Even overachievers who have "excelled in structured environments" need a driving passion for what they do—otherwise eighteen-hour days and intense pressure become pointless and deadly. (2) McKinsey, like other consulting and banking firms, paints a deceptively rosy picture of its corporate culture: I was told that twelve-hour days were standard, travel was minimal, and the work was always intellectually stimulating, all of which proved false. (3) Business is still a man's world, one in which I encountered overt and veiled sexism and was constantly coached to become "more like a man"—assertive, aggressive, and even arrogant. Quitting was extremely difficult for me—after all, overachievers waver and panic when forced, for the first time, to create their own "next big step." For now, I've decided to teach high-school English, which carries its own rewards—passion, personal impact, flexibility. It may not be McKinsey, but perhaps that's not such a bad thing.

JULIA LEE
Los Angeles, Calif.

DON'T FORGET TO VOTE: The ballot for the first annual *New Yorker* Book Awards can be found on page 189.

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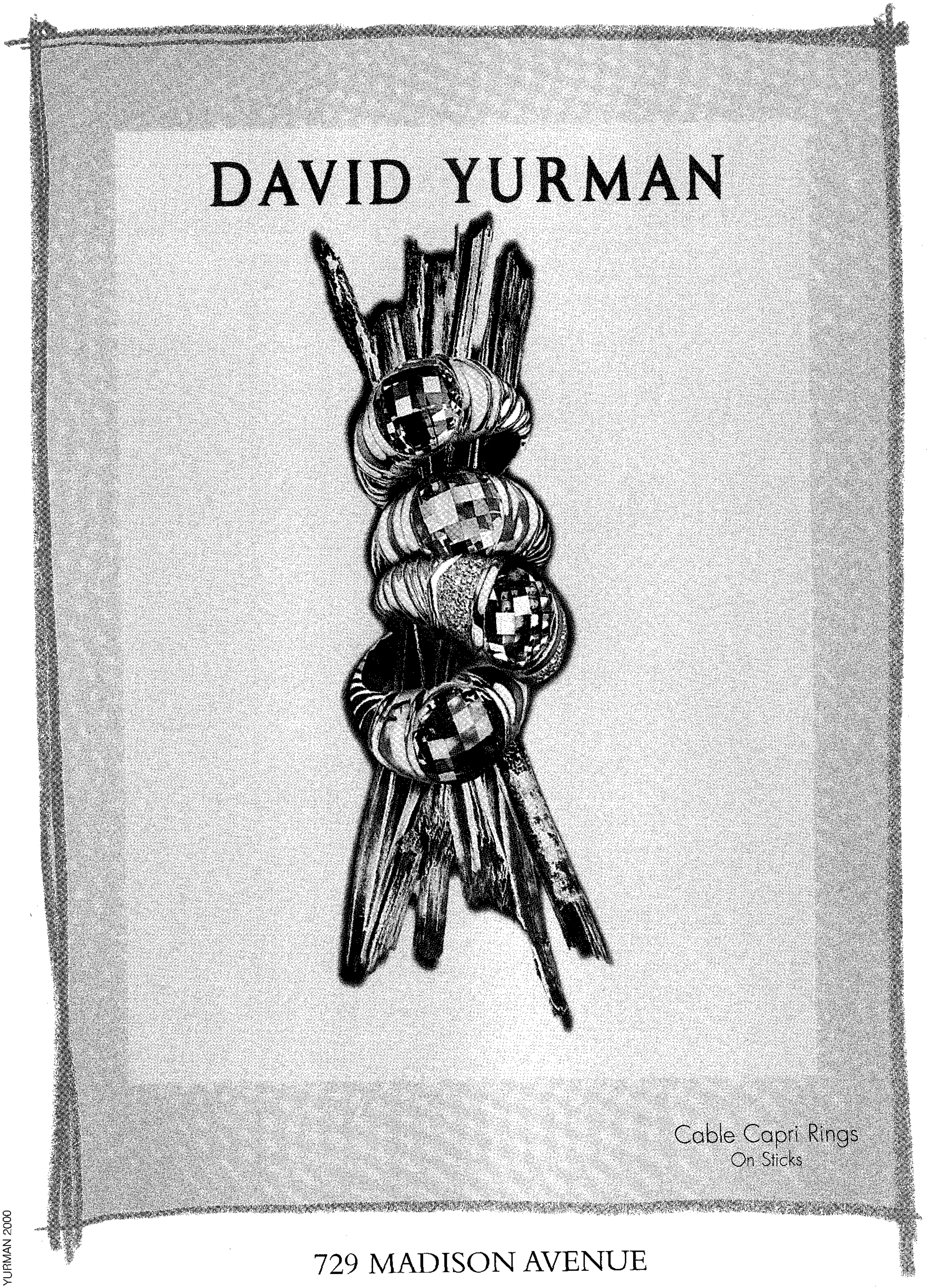

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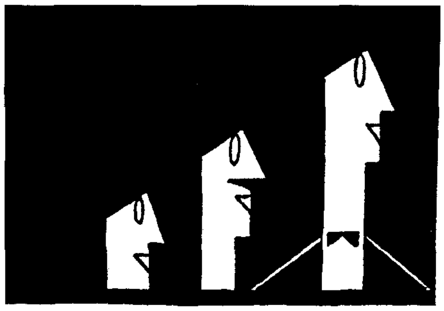

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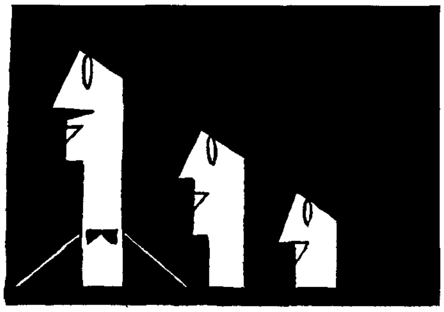


THE THEATRE

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

In the Blood—Suzan-Lori Parks's new play is based on "The Scarlet Letter." Directed by David Esbjornson. In previews through Nov. 20. Opens Nov. 21 at 8. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 239-6200.)

John Gabriel Borkman—Ibsen's late drama, in a staging by the Pearl Theatre Company. In previews through Nov. 21. Opens Nov. 22 at 7. (80 St. Marks Pl. 598-9802.)

Kiss Me, Kate—Brian Stokes Mitchell and Marin Mazzie star in a revival of the Cole Porter musical, under the direction of Michael Blakemore. Two previews on Nov. 17. Opens Nov. 18 at 6:30. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Last Train to Nibroc—A love story set in Kentucky during the Second World War, by Arlene Hutton. In previews through Nov. 20. Opens Nov. 21 at 7. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

Marie Christine—In Michael John LaChiusa's new musical, set in New Orleans in the eighteen-hundreds, Audra McDonald portrays a woman obsessed with love for a sea captain (Anthony Crivello). Graciela Daniele is the director. In previews. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Putting It Together—A revue celebrating the songs of Stephen Sondheim, starring Carol Burnett. Directed by Eric D. Schaeffer. In previews through Nov. 20. Opens Nov. 21 at 6:30. (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

Shyster—Fisher Stevens, Annabella Sciorra, and Phyllis Newman are in the cast of a comedy by Bryan Goluboff, staged by Naked Angels. Previews begin Nov. 18. (Blue Heron, 123 E. 24th St. 279-4200.)

Space—A scientist encounters three people with similar stories about contact with otherworldly beings, in a drama by Tina Landau ("Floyd Collins"). Ms. Landau is the director. In previews. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 239-6200.)

Swing!—A musical salute to the genre, starring the jazz vocalist Ann Hampton Callaway. Directed and choreographed by Lynne Taylor-Corbett. In previews. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Trudy Blue—In the latest play from Marsha Norman ("'night, Mother"), Polly Draper stars as a successful Manhattan novelist in a moment of crisis. In previews. (MCC, 120 W. 28th St. 727-7765.)

True History and Real Adventures—Michael Mayer directs a musical play by Sybille Pearson, about a Scottish girl who comes to America at the turn of the century in search of Calamity Jane. Kathleen Chalfant is in the cast. In previews. (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3366.)

Y2K—James Naughton and Patricia Kalember portray an affluent New York couple whose lives are turned upside down by a computer hacker, in a drama by Arthur Kopit. In previews. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200).

OPENED RECENTLY

Ancestral Voices—A staged reading, with a rotating cast, of A. R. Gurney's play. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

CHARLES BARSOTTI

Atlantic Theatre Company—The troupe offers a season of plays by David Mamet. First up: "The Water Engine" and "Mr. Happiness." (336 W. 20th St. 645-1242. Closes Nov. 21.)

Contact—The director and choreographer Susan Stroman's dance play, co-conceived with John Weidman, is a triptych of simple stories which proposes that dance and dancers can revive the musical. It's about the various forms of human connection, the atmosphere of longing, and it's a big-hearted, witty crowd-pleaser—startling and fresh and free from the infernal pretentiousness of Broadway. (Reviewed in our issue of 10/18-25/99.) (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

The Country Club—Douglas Carter Beane's satire on the young suburban set is loaded with witty dialogue, and the production is graced by the Drama Dept.'s always good acting and a fine set, but Beane's writing suffers from a peculiar shallowness almost worthy of his characters. They satirize themselves, too, but it all has the effect of a valentine rather than a biting sendup. (Greenwich House, 27 Barrow St. 541-8441.)

Dame Edna: The Royal Tour—Former housewife turned international entertainer Dame Edna Everage (the sublime comic creation of the Australian Dadaist and dandy Barry Humphries) is, to adopt her penchant for alliteration, a virago of vitriol, a harpy of happiness, a megastar of maliciousness. She's also a bit like Tinkerbell, real if the audience believes in her, and it's a testament to the power of the character and of Humphries's performance that she compels instant belief. Humphries gets the audience—all of it—to play with Dame Edna, and slowly it becomes a character. "Isn't it funny," she tells a couple she's coaxed onstage to eat a meal as she continues with her routine, "you paid to come to a show, and you are the show." (11/1/99) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Dinner with Friends—Donald Margulies's new play concerns two upper-middle-class couples who have been married for a dozen or so years; one of them survives the wear and tear of marriage, and the other doesn't. It's an intelligent depiction of the mystery and the mundanity of marriage—Margulies avoids making his characters' situations schematic or inevitable—and Matthew Arkin, Lisa Emery, Kevin Kilner, and Julie White give well-rounded performances. Directed by Daniel Sullivan. (Variety Arts, 110 Third Ave., at 14th St. 239-6200.)

Eclipsed—Patricia Burke Brogan's drama, set in Ireland, follows the lives of four unwed mothers forced to labor as penitents in a convent laundry. (Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. 727 2737.)

1839—Gale Gates et al.'s new production is a multimedia meditation on the mind of Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre, the inventor of the daguerreotype. (37 Main St., Brooklyn. 718-522-4597.)

Epic Proportions—A spoof of the making of a Biblical movie on location in the Arizona desert during the early thirties; it dramatizes many plagues, but no plague greater than the one that corporate culture has visited on Broadway in the last few years. What's strange in a piece that has no ear for the moment is that it contains the pitch-perfect performance of Kristin Chenoweth, a comedienne of terrific originality and charm. (10/18-25/99) (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

The Exact Center of the Universe—Joan Vail Thorne's small-town comedy, starring Frances Sternhagen. (Century Theatre, 111 E. 15th St. 239-6200.)

An Experiment with an Air Pump—The odd title of Shelagh Stevenson's play describes a study carried out by its eighteenth-century characters; their attempt to determine how much oxygen deprivation animals can endure neatly encapsulates the play's themes—the relationships between science and morality, scientific passion and love, knowledge and society's stability—which are explored with humor and intelligence. Set both at the end of the eighteenth century and on our own upcoming millennial New Year's Eve, the play smoothly plumbs its engaging characters' fears of the future while puncturing our pompous notion that

LIEV SCHREIBER AS ORSON WELLES

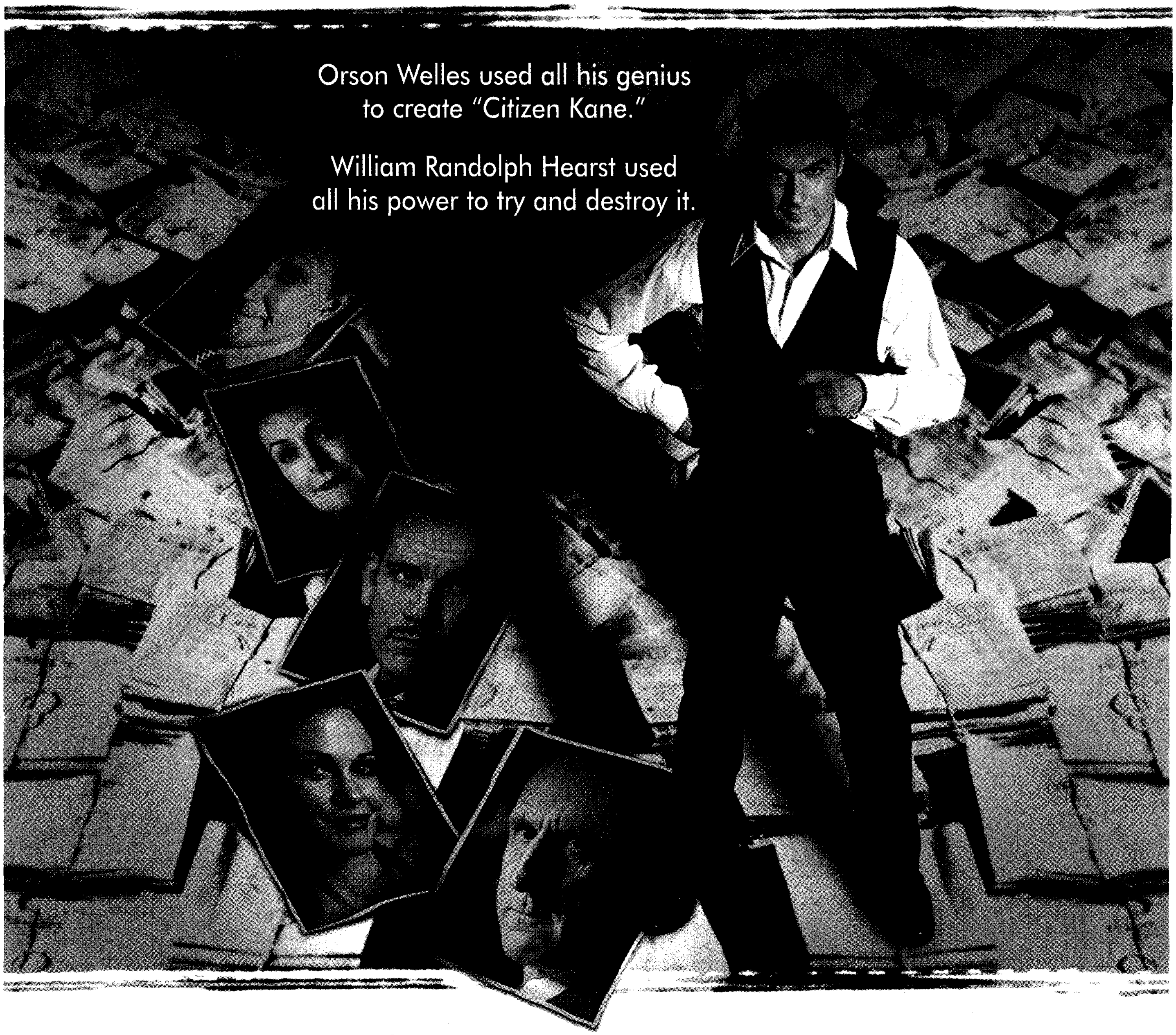
JAMES CROMWELL AS WILLIAM RANDOLPH HEARST

MELANIE GRIFFITH AS MARION DAVIES

BRENDA BLETHYN AS LOUELLA PARSONS

ROY SCHEIDER AS GEORGE SCHAEFER

and **JOHN MALKOVICH** AS HERMAN MANKIEWICZ


Orson Welles used all his genius
to create "Citizen Kane."
William Randolph Hearst used
all his power to try and destroy it.

HBO PICTURES PRESENTS

RKO 281

HBO PICTURES PRESENTS IN ASSOCIATION WITH WGBH BOSTON A SCOTT FREE PRODUCTION A BENJAMIN ROSS FILM LIEV SCHREIBER JAMES CROMWELL MELANIE GRIFFITH AND JOHN MALKOVICH "RKO 281"
LIAM CUNNINGHAM FIONA SHAW ANASTASIA HILLE WITH BRENDA BLETHYN AND ROY SCHEIDER MUSIC BY JOHN ALTMAN EDITOR ALEX MACKIE PRODUCTION DESIGNER MARIA DJURKOVIC
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY MIKE SOUTHON BSC PRODUCED BY SU ARMSTRONG CO-EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS DIANE MINTER LEWIS, CHRIS ZARPAS EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS RIDLEY SCOTT, TONY SCOTT WRITTEN BY JOHN LOGAN DIRECTED BY BENJAMIN ROSS

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this New Year is different from all others. The cast, led by Linda Emond and Daniel Gerroll, is uniformly fine; deftly directed by Doug Hughes. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 313 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Fuddy Meers—The very promising playwright David Lindsay-Abaire's kitchen-sink comedy goes so over the top that you might miss the melancholy beneath the absurd chaos. In a cast of characters (played by the best comic ensemble in years) which includes a blissful amnesiac, a maimed criminal with a speech impediment, a protective mother whose stroke has rendered her Caryl Churchill cryptic, and a sweet kook who expresses his anger with a hand puppet, no one is who they seem and everyone is connected in surprising ways, and through surprising needs—the *Über*-dysfunctional family? The point seems to be that in this upside-down world, saying what you need to say is not only difficult but also a privilege, and memory is as much a burden as a blessing. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Give Me Your Answer, Do!—In Brian Friel's latest drama, two Irish friends and novelists, one a commercial failure, the other a best-seller, come together with their wives (and some in-laws and a literary archivist) for a late-summer afternoon of cocktails and angst. The whole thing builds to a vaguely "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" fervor in the second act, but the performances are exhilarating, so you forgive the unnecessarily melodramatic ending. (Gramercy, 127 E. 23rd St. 777-4900.)

I Love Dick—From Mabou Mines, an adaptation of the autobiographical novel by Chris Kraus, in which a woman's crush on a cultural critic inspires her husband to fall for him, too. Wednesdays through Sundays at 8, through Nov. 28. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 473-0559.)

James Joyce's The Dead—A musical version of the short story. (11/8/99) (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes Nov. 28.)

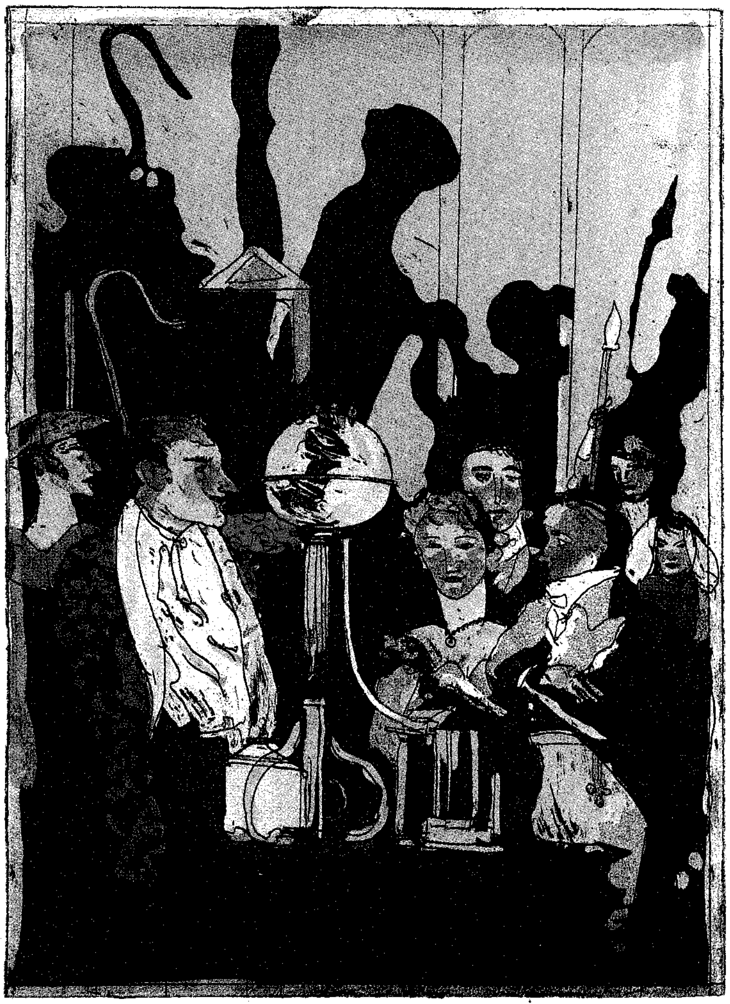
The Jazz Singer—The Jewish Repertory Theatre presents a new musical version of the Samson Raphaelson play, about a man torn between his Orthodox family and his Broadway aspirations. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000.)

Kat and the Kings—A rock-and-roll musical set in Cape Town in 1957. (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Keep Bangin'—"Stomp" showed that you can cook up an evening of theatre out of percussion alone, but this show proves it better. It's an unslick production—the point is the drumming alone. The ten-man cast is led by Jared Crawford, who, with his million-toothed smile, firestorm of dreads, and rare genius, lifts the whole thing into a kind of art heaven. (Players Theatre, 115 MacDougal St. 254-5076.)

Maybe Baby, It's You—Love in the big city, explained with many laughs by the show's accomplished writer-performers, Charlie Shanian and Shari Simpson. There's an undercurrent of sweetness and longing that makes the evening more than a series of skits—it's what you instinctively know at thirty but wish you'd learned at twenty. Directed with a sure, light touch by Jeremy Dobrish. (Soho Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 239-6200.)

Morning, Noon and Night—A day in the life of the eccentric, obsessive monologuist Spalding Gray, removed from his natural habitat (New York City) and transplanted to an old house in Sag Harbor, where he lives in anxiety-tinged bliss with his girlfriend, stepdaughter, and two young sons. A haze of happiness hangs over the whole thing, which makes it seem a bit toothless, but Gray tells a good coming-of-age story, and his self-mocking exaggerations are actually endearing when turned on the domestic universe. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)



"An Experiment with an Air Pump," by Shelagh Stevenson, at M.T.C."

ROBERT ANDREW PARKER

North Atlantic—A multimedia work in progress from the Wooster Group. (Performing Garage, 33 Wooster St. 966-3651. Closes Nov. 21.)

The Price—A revival of Arthur Miller's 1968 play. James Naughton is the director. (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

The Rainmaker—Jayne Atkinson and Woody Harrelson star in the Roundabout Theatre Company's revival of Richard Nash's 1954 drama. Scott Ellis is the director. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

Saturday Night Fever—The musical, based on the 1977 film. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

Showy Lady Slipper—Richard Maxwell's new show consists mostly of the gossipy conversation of three female friends awaiting a visit from the alpha-girl's boyfriend. The conversation is stunning in its banality, but, like a good pop song, it has surprising resonances, and Maxwell's distinctive style—actors as poker-faced conduits for dialogue, chunky staging, sobriety-test movement—is hilarious. The boyfriend finally does arrive, and tragedy and redemption ensue, but the fundamental pleasure is in the language—and in the harmonious, ridiculous songs (this is a musical, by the way) that the actors break into during their most emotional moments. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. Closes Nov. 28.)

Stars in Your Eyes—A musical by Chip Meyrelles, set in two small towns during the Kennedy Administration. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 239-6200.)

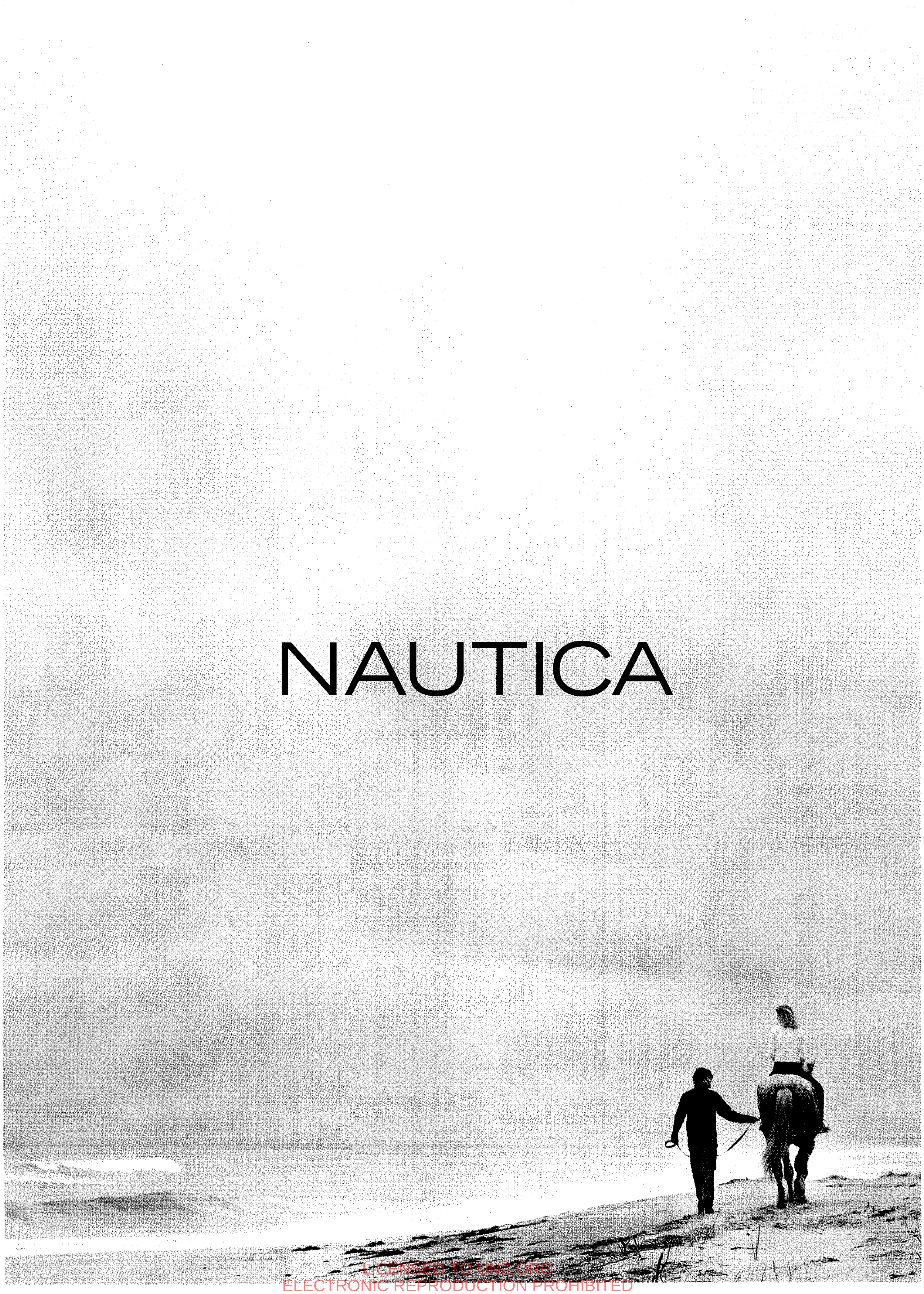
Tango Argentino—The dance revue, in a limited-engagement encore staging. (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

Uncle Jack—The Worth Street Theatre presents Jeff Cohen's contemporary adaptation of Chekhov's "Uncle Vanya," set in rural West Virginia. (Tribeca Playhouse, 111 Reade St. 604-4195.)

The Vagina Monologues—Eve Ensler's one-woman show, which she first performed in New York three years ago Off-Off Broadway, is based on interviews she conducted with two hundred women about their vaginas: the body part itself, the word, and why "it never sounds like a word you want to say" no matter how many times you say it. There's a certain amount of shtick involved—Ensler asked women what their vaginas would wear if they got dressed, and she offers up a litany of nicknames for "down there"—but most of the stories she tells are touching and memorable. Often sadly so: Ensler makes you realize that when it comes to treating women and their bodies with real respect, the world still has miles to go. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.)

LONG RUNS

ANNIE GET YOUR GUN: Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CABARET:** Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 239-6200. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CHICAGO:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **DE LA GUARDA:** Daryl Roth, 20 Union Sq. E., at 15th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **FOOTLOOSE:** Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100. . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY:** Stardust, Broadway at 51st St. 239-6200. . . . **FOSSE:** Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH:** Jane Street Theatre, Hotel Riverview Ballroom, 113 Jane St. 239-6200. . . . **I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE:** West-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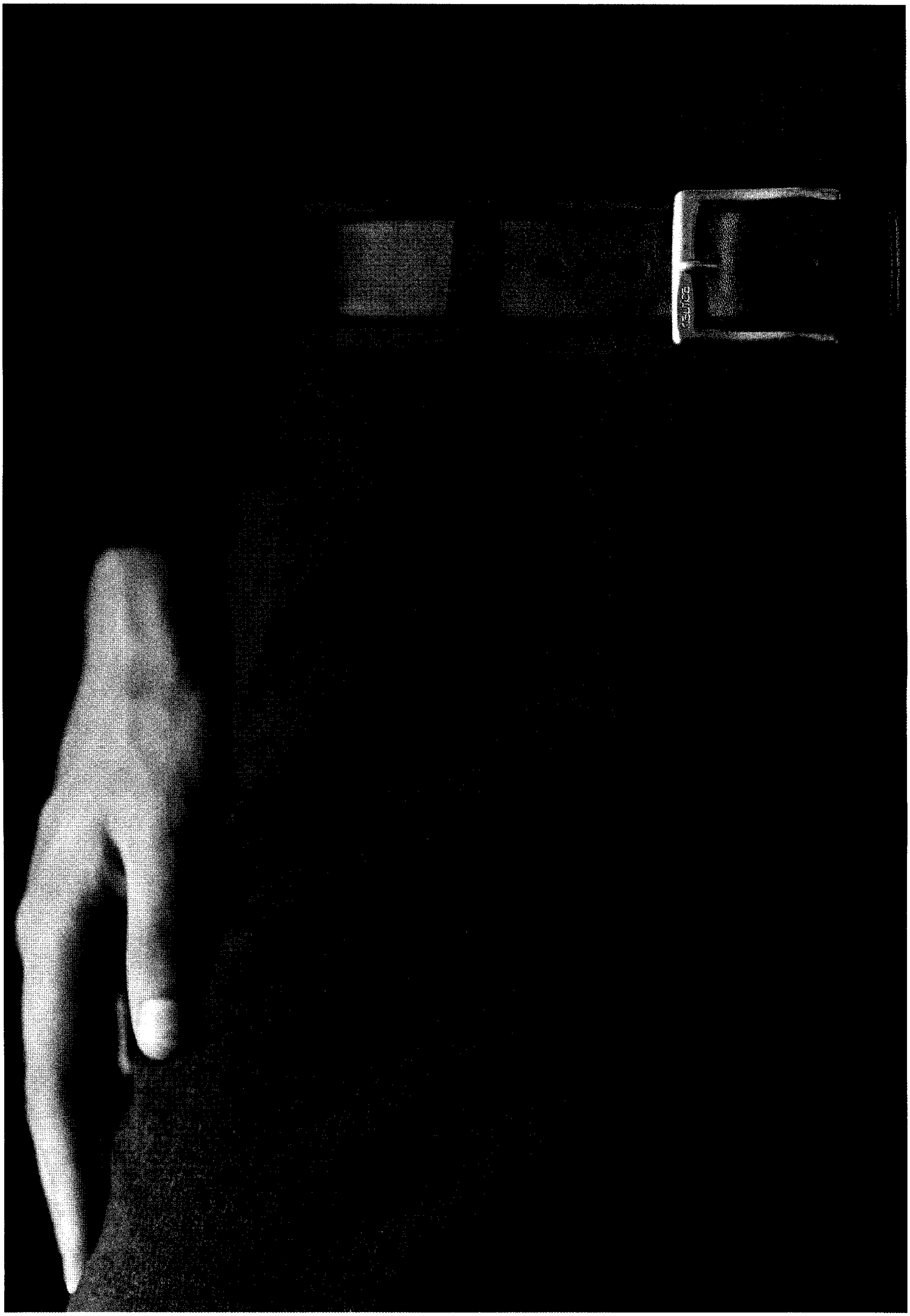
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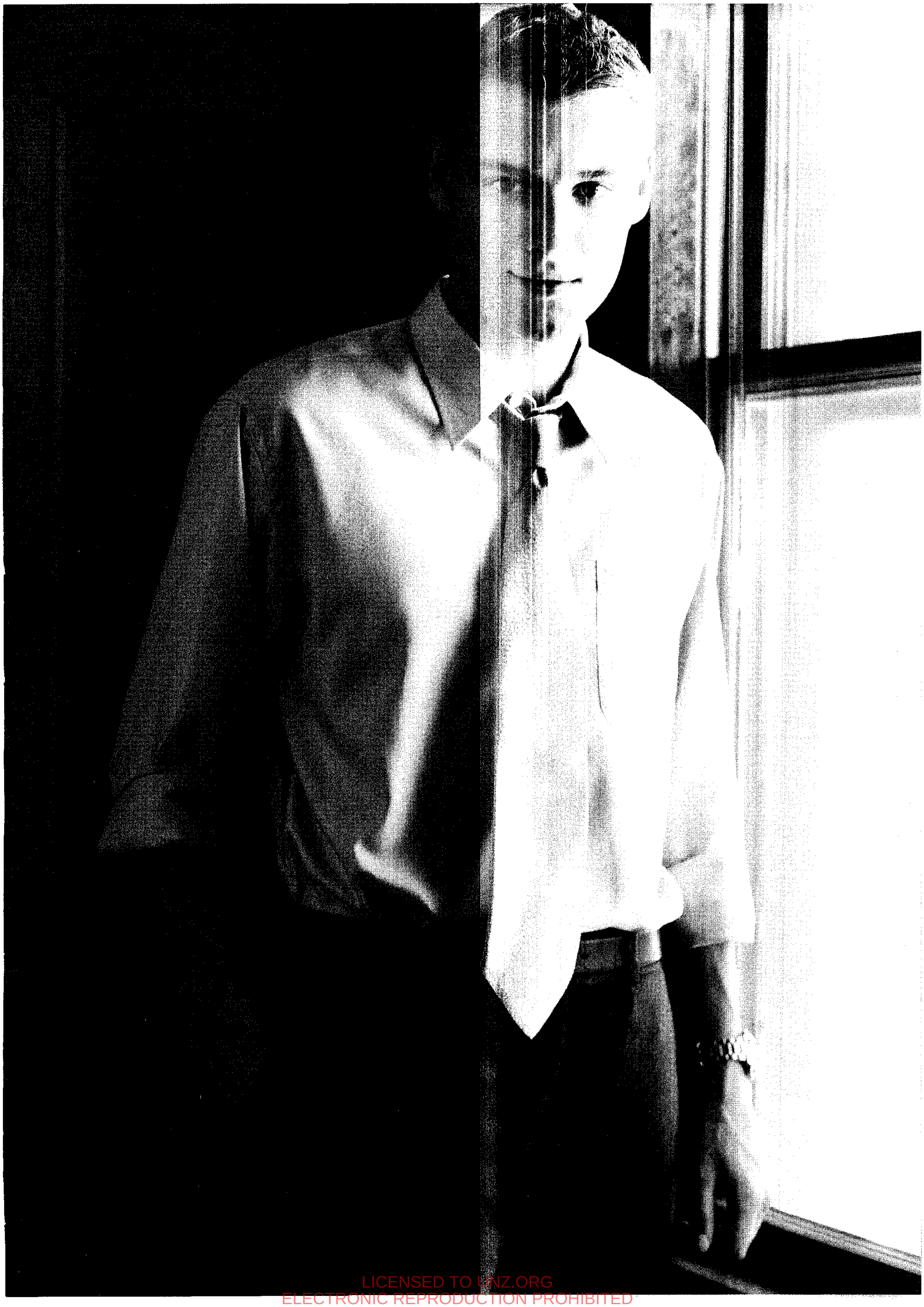

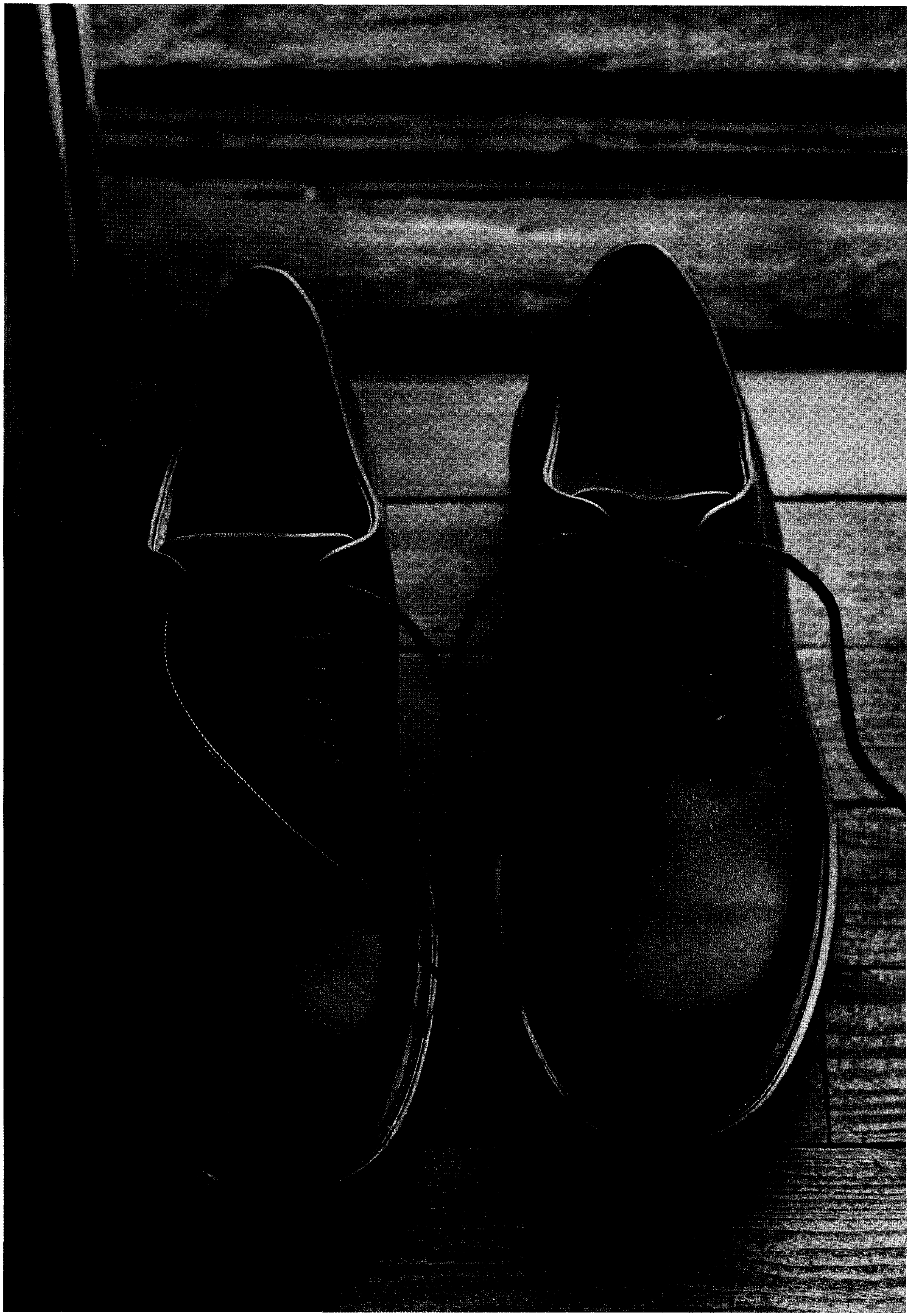

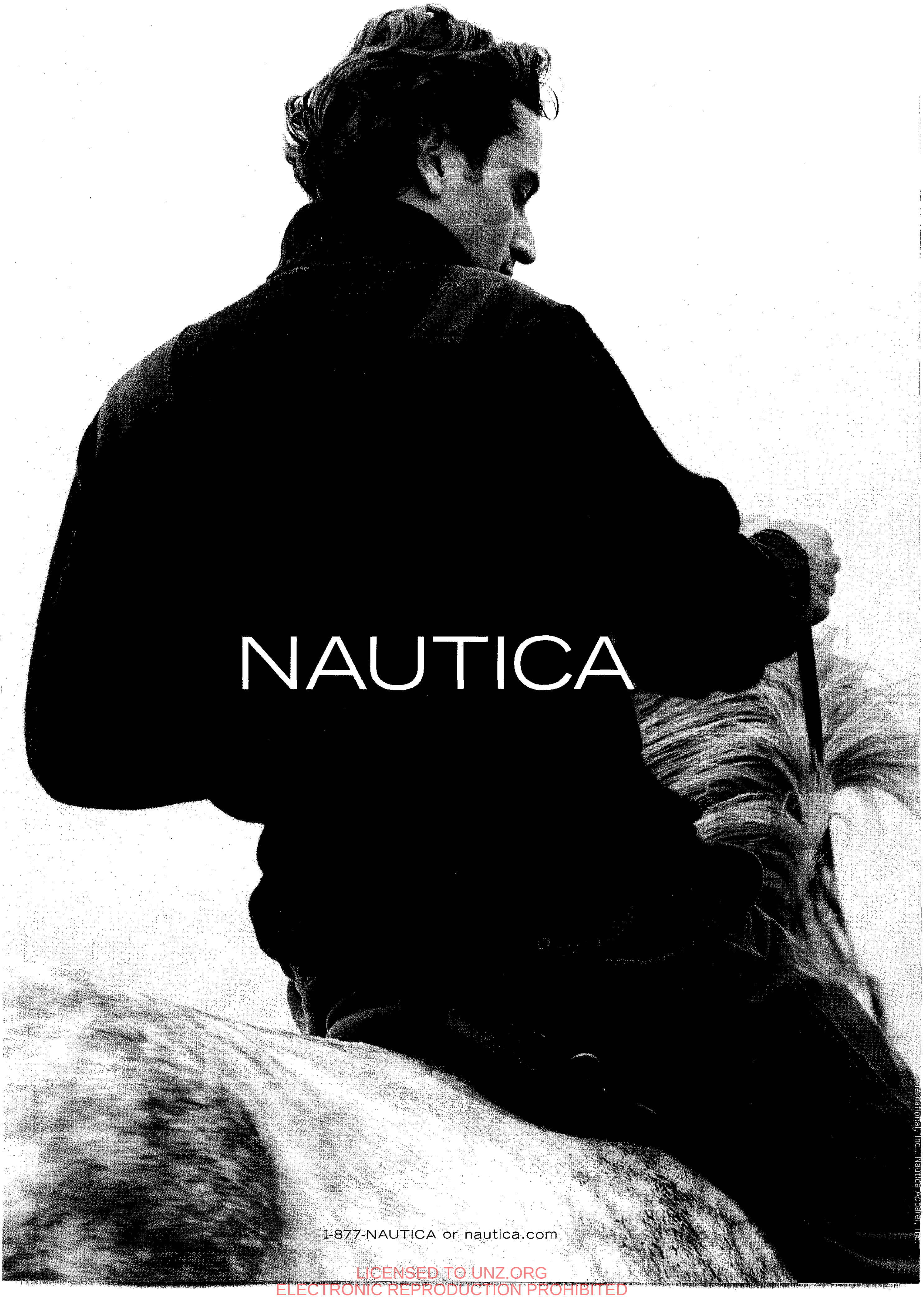
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side, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200. . . . **IT AIN'T NOTHIN' BUT THE BLUES:** Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **JEKYLL & HYDE:** Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **LATE-NITE CATECHISM:** St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE LION KING:** New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 307-4100. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **OVER THE RIVER AND THROUGH THE WOODS:** John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **RAGTIME:** Ford Center for the Performing Arts, 213 W. 42nd St. 307-4100. . . . **RENT:** Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000. . . . **THE SCARLET PIMPERNEL:** Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100. . . . **SECRETS EVERY SMART TRAVELER SHOULD KNOW:** Ibis, 327 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477. . . . **THINGS YOU SHOULDN'T SAY PAST MIDNIGHT:** Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE WEIR:** Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200. (Closes Nov. 28.) . . . **WIT:** Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 307-4100.

DANCE

"Suzanne Farrell Stages the Masters of 20th Century Ballet"—From 1961 to 1989, it was always the other way around. Now, the prima ballerina returns the favor, with two programs of works by Robbins, Béjart, and Balanchine, including "Meditation," a duet from 1963 whose female role had previously been performed only by Farrell. (New Victory, 209 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. Nov. 18-19 and Nov. 23 at 7, Nov. 20 at 2 and 7, and Nov. 21 at 3. Through Nov. 28.)

Garth Fagan Dance—The Jamaican-born choreographer of "The Lion King" brings his Rochester-based company for an engagement that includes the première of "Woza," which means "come" and "come celebrate" in Zulu, and revivals of "Postscript Posthumous: Ellington" and "Oatka Trail." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Nov. 16-20 at 8 and Nov. 21 at 2 and 7:30.)

"Songs of the Himalayas"—The Osaka-based Oriental Ballet Company, with guests Irina Dvorovenko and Maxim Belotserkovsky of the American Ballet Theatre, performs three works by the choreographer Rika Yu. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 307-4100. Nov. 21 at 7:30.)

"Empathy"—The choreographer RoseAnne Spradlin offers two short solos ("Desire," "Theory of Mind") and the title work, a trio about intimacy and other skirmishes, in which the dancers wear costumes of translucent rubber. (Danspace Project, St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. Nov. 18-21 at 8:30.)

Dance Theatre Workshop—A festival of genre-crossing in the dance and performance-art venue. Nov. 16-18 at 8: A split bill with "Love and Race in the U.S. Revisited," in which Robbie McCauley presents a lecture by a "race doctor," and "Ha," in which Dawn Akemi Saito mixes vaudeville and Butoh. . . . ¶ Nov. 19-20 at 8 and Nov. 21 at 3: "Dominicanish," by Josefina Baez, who mixes poetry, nonsense texts, and the Kuchipudi dance traditions of southeast India, and "My Affair with the Teacher," by Jenny Bass, who uses transcripts of conversations with Balanchine's various muses. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077.)

"Flare! II"—For this presentation of her work in progress, "The Panther Peace," the choreographer Maia Claire Garrison returns to a format that's part performance and part party (before and after the work, with music by InI Mighty Lock Down, her brother Matthew Garrison, and DJ Boodakhan). (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793. Nov. 19-20, from 7.)

Les Ballets Africains—The national dance company of Guinea, under the direction of Keita Fodeba. (Whitman Theatre, Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts, Brooklyn College. 718-951-4500. Nov. 20 at 8.)

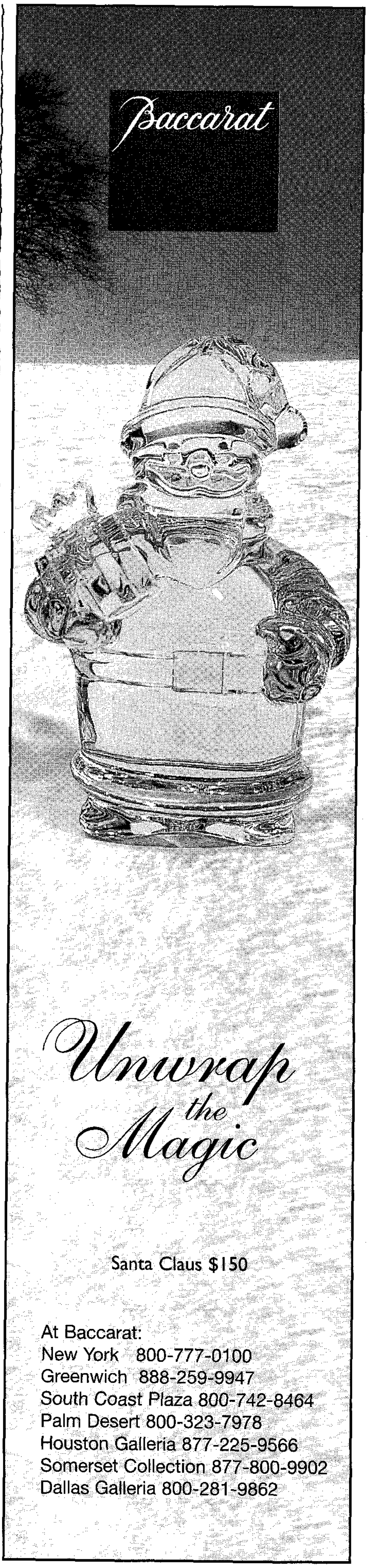
Peggy Spina Tap Company—The ten-member troupe performs a program of homages and commissions, including "In His Memory (Chuck Green)" and the boogie-woogie-style "Helen's Heart." (Spina Loft, 115 Prince St. 674-8885. Nov. 19 at 8 and Nov. 20 at 6 and 8:30.)

THE LION QUEEN: *The long and supple Sharon Skepple Mayfield is as relaxed as a cat in Garth Fagan's choreography, which mixes elements of African movement with balletic turns and strikingly high leg lifts. The Caribbean dancer appears in eight works during the Fagan company's current two-week Joyce run. She fell in love with the choreographer's style eleven years ago, when his dancers came to the North Carolina School of the Arts, where she was a student. To Mayfield, who was born in Antigua and raised in St. Croix, their pieces looked like what she'd grown up with. "It was the stuff I did as a kid," she says, "but without the big hats and costumes." She joined the company three months later. Now, the breathtaking solo she performs in "From Before"—the work that inspired her that day—has become her signature piece.*

RON LEACH

"I Think I Ken"—The @dance troupe appears in an evening-length work choreographed by Allan Tibbetts about relationships between various plastic characters: Barbie, Ken, G.I. Joe, Skipper, Kira, Carlos, and differently abled Becky. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202. Nov. 18-21 at 8. Through Nov. 21.)

"A Girl Joan"—Erica Stuart reprises her evening-length solo in the role of Joan of Arc. (HERE. Nov. 17 at 8. Through Nov. 24.)



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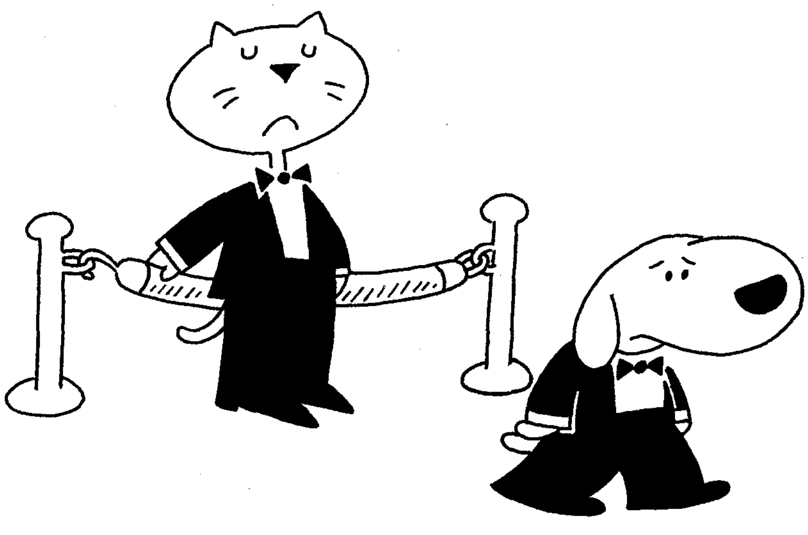

CHARLES BARSOTTI

NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

Sting—The most self-conscious pop icon since Richard Nixon, whose latest release, "Brand New Day," is finely crafted and infuriatingly dispassionate. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Nov. 16-17, Nov. 19, and Nov. 21 at 8.)

Billy Taylor Trio—Taylor's piano work mirrors his personality, which is sturdy, erudite, and resolutely mainstream. Epiphanies may be few, but quality is a given. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Nov. 18 at 7.)

Fred Hersch—With his exquisite touch, sensitivity to texture, and poetic imagination, pianist Hersch brings to mind the late Bill Evans, the dean of modern jazz piano, but with his contemporary leanings, he keeps his own personality right out in front. (Kaplan Penthouse, Rose Building, Lincoln Center. 875-5599. Nov. 18 at 8.)

Jazz Composer's Collective—The venturesome ideas and felicitious playing of the Collective's musicians actually make you look forward to the new millennium. Saxophonist Ted Nash convenes his Double Quartet, whose new album, "Rhyme & Reason," is a high point of the year. Nash is joined by members of the Collective, including pianist Frank Kimbrough and bassist Ben Allison, and a special guest, trumpeter Wynton Marsalis, whose work with these new-jazz visionaries is a hopeful sign for his own artistic growth. (New School, 55 W. 13th St. For more information, call 995-1552. Nov. 18 at 8.)

Wycliff Gordon and Eric Reed Duo—The years that trombonist Gordon and pianist Reed put in as members of Wynton Marsalis's ensemble resulted in their own quick-witted and intuitive collaboration. (Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. 708-9480. Nov. 19 at 5:30.)

Patti LuPone—The Broadway veteran in a benefit concert. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Nov. 19 at 8.)

Live—The brooding Pennsylvania combo is back, with material from its new Jerry Harrison-produced album, "The Distance to Here." With Cibo Matto, the Japanese-American duo that samples everything from French pop to Brooklyn hip-hop. (Hammerstein Ballroom, Manhtattan Center, 311 W. 34th St. 564-4882. Nov. 19 at 8.)

Mísia—The plaintive sounds of fado arose from the working-class Alfama district of Lisbon in the early nineteenth century; this Portuguese singer's haunting voice so epitomizes the music's sorrow, she sounds as if she spent a previous life wandering those narrow streets leading to the Tagus River. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Nov. 19 at 8:30.)

David Sanborn—Alto saxophonist Sanborn possesses one of the most passionate and distinctive sounds in jazz. Why he uses it to make flaccid, borderline-jazz recordings is between him and his accountant. (Town Hall. Nov. 20 at 7.)

CLUBS

(Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

Arlene Grocery, 95 Stanton St., between Ludlow and Orchard Sts. (358-1633)—Nov. 17: The rock of **JESUS CHRYSLER SUPERCAR** is as rollicking and mixed up as its name, and onstage the band members wear stock-car-racing jumpsuits.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Nov. 19-20: **BO DIDDLEY.** Those pounding tom-toms, those sinewy maracas, that distorted, fuse-blowing guitar.

Bowery Ballroom, 6 Delancey St. (533-2111)—Nov. 20-21: **NRBQ** celebrates thirty years on the road. Nov. 22: The seductive singer **AMEL LARRIEUX** has graced the top of the R. & B. charts as one half of the group Groove Theory and has gotten down and dirty with the Philadelphia rap conglomerate the Roots.

Brownies, 169 Avenue A, at 10th St. (420-8392)—Nov. 19: England's **HEFNER** writes lo-fi songs about girls, cigarettes, and longing, all delivered with nasal passion by chief lyricist Darren Hayman. Nov. 21: **VERSUS,** a topnotch combo with a gift for Sonic Youth-style droning, and **TRANS AM,** a Washington, D.C., instrumental trio that experiments with keyboard effects, electronic beats, and found sounds (such as noise from a D.C. train station).

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—Nov. 20: With song titles like "Synthetic Dream" and "Fields of Psilocybin," the long-haired trio **NEBULA** rocks with a retro-punch that's straight out of the Age of Aquarius.

Chicago B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—Nov. 19-20: **JOE LOUIS WALKER.** The San Francisco bluesman's latest disk, "Silvertone Blues," relies on his solid tenor, piercing slide work, and the contribution of harmonica master James Cotton to produce a blues sound as down to earth as the mud of the Mississippi Delta.

Fez, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—It's easy to see that the members of **JOSH MAX'S OUTFIT**—singer and guitarist Josh Max, iron-lunged vocalist Julie James, bassist Catherine Popper, and drummer Alan Lerner—are having a hell of a time turning out what they call "lounge-o-billy." On the afternoon of Nov. 20 they celebrate their self-released CD, "Make It Snappy." Nov. 21-22: **PATTY GRIFFIN.** A few years ago, this lanky, red-headed spitfire made bare-bones acoustic folk in the manner of Jewel, only without the platitudes. Last year, with a resounding commercial thud, she released "Flaming Red," a magisterial collection that challenged her incredible voice with electric guitars and head-butting drums; it may have been the most underappreciated record of 1998. The **MINGUS BIG BAND** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—Nov. 17: The English d.j. Richard Fearless's band **DEATH IN VEGAS** came out of the London dance scene of the early nineties. The success of their big-beat electronica found them on tour here in 1997 with the Chemical Brothers and produced a minor hit, "Dirt." Death's new album, "The Contino Sessions," is a mature rock record, and this live show, which features an eight-piece band, promises to be a trip. Nov. 19-20: The hardworking New Orleans band **THE RADIATORS** has a rowdy national following that falls somewhere between the Deadheads and Jimmy Buffett's parrotheads. Nov. 22: **CAFÉ TACUBA.** This *rock en español* act takes its name from a small restaurant in its home town, Mexico City, but don't expect an evening of mariachi. Tacuba is certainly Latin, but the band is also fluent in funk, ska, and even old-fashioned punk. Nov. 23: **STEVE VAI.** Long Island's very own long-haired guitar hero, who cut his teeth as a hired gun with Frank Zappa and later toured with David Lee Roth before lighting out on his own. Vai is a convincing six-string Paganini—the speed and dexterity with which he attacks his instrument are dazzling—but taste and sensitivity are not his strong points.

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Nov. 21: **MAGMA,** a thirty-year-old French progressive-rock collective with a cult following. Nov. 22: Detroit's **ANDRE WILLIAMS,** a.k.a. Mr. Rhythm, started rapping in the age of transistor radios; since the late fifties he's been sweating out a strange body of funky music. His latest disk, "Red Dirt," takes a turn down country lanes, paying homage to Hank Williams, Waylon Jennings, and Patsy Cline. Nov. 23: The evolving Continental punk of **BARBEZ.**

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken (201-798-0406)—Nov. 20: Original, smoking rockabilly with **KIM LENZ AND THE JAGUARS.**

Mercury Lounge, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—Nov. 22: **THE WILD COLONIALS,** once the salonistes of the L.A. music scene (Dr. John, Cyndi Lauper, and Rickie Lee Jones appeared on the band's 1996 CD, "This Can't Be Life"), have since lost their record deal. Fortunately, the band soldiers on, still driven by Angela McCluskey's heartfelt honey-and-hot-sauce vocals.

Rodeo Bar, 375 Third Ave., at 27th St. (683-6500)—Nov. 21: **KIM LENZ AND THE JAGUARS** (see Maxwell's).

Shine, 285 West Broadway, at Canal St. (941-0900)—Nov. 18: **DOT ALLISON** was the ethereal voice of the Manchester electronica chill-out group One Dove, which disbanded in 1996; now the platinum-blond singer has released a shimmering, colorful solo début, "Afterglow." It's a welcome return.

S.O.B.'s, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—Nov. 17: Vibraphonist **ROY AYERS** is enjoying a mid-career resurgence owing to that most contemporary of sources, sampling. The funky jazz recordings he churned out in the seventies are now being plundered by hip-hop artists in search of old-school grooves. Nov. 18: **BASEMENT BHANGRA,** an evening of ecstatic, futuristic dance music which fuses an ancient Punjabi harvest festival with the technological wonders of underground London. Dining.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Vocalist **ANDREA MARCOVICCI** is currently at work in the woody nook known as the Oak Room. Dining.

Birdland, 315 W. 44th St. (581-3080)—Nov. 17-20: The **NICHOLAS PAYTON** quartet. A growing number of young bop-based trumpeters pride themselves these days on understand-

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ROLEX

BOOK CURRENTS

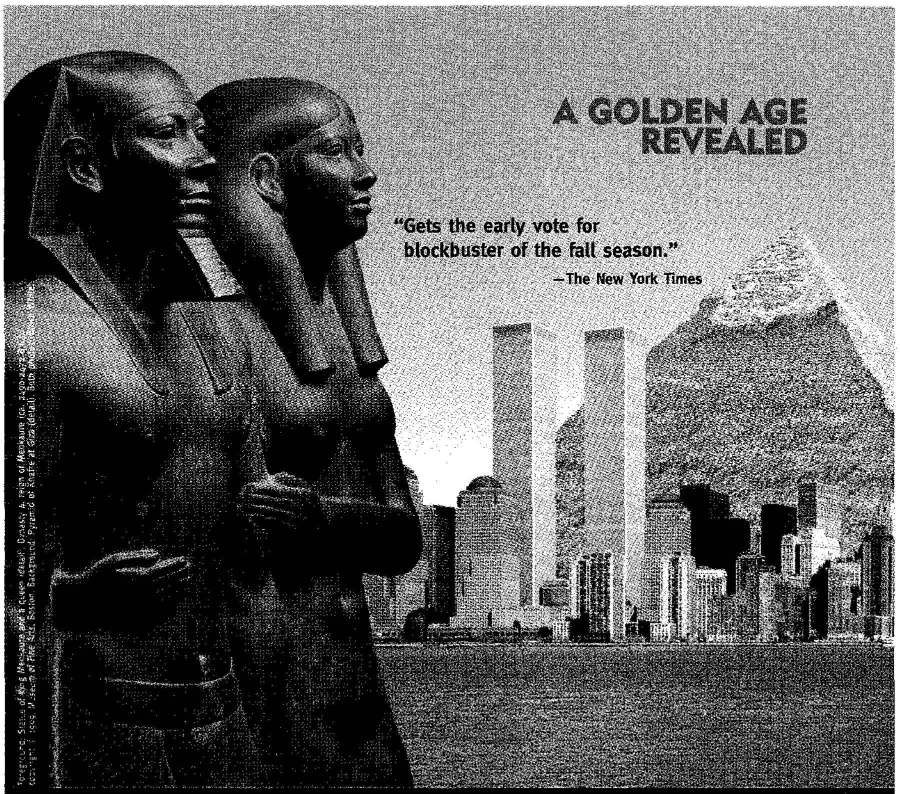
The Real American Pie

SHORTLY after the Pilgrims arrived in the New World, friendly Native Americans like Squanto and Chief Massasoit introduced them to a cornucopia of foodstuffs—hunted, gathered, and cultivated—that were otherwise invisible to European eyes. Pictorial accounts from the late sixteenth century show tidy fields of corn and beans planted inside the walls of Powhatan villages; along with squash, these domesticated plants made up the triad upon which the earliest American cuisine was founded.

Beverly Cox and Martin Jacobs make these points in their classic SPIRIT OF THE HARVEST (Stewart, Tabori & Chang), a lavishly illustrated exploration of Native American cooking. In the Northeast, wild turkeys were smaller and tougher than today's Butterball; the first Thanksgiving bird was probably spit-roasted, and may have been seasoned with spicebush berries, wild onions, and sage. In Florida, Seminole feasts included pompano fish stuffed with grapes, and on the Great Plains, Hidatsa villagers served up baked sugar pumpkins stuffed with savory buffalo and wild rice. NATIVE INDIAN WILD GAME, FISH AND WILD FOODS COOKBOOK (Fox Chapel) is a game-heavy collection of recipes from the Lovesick Lake Native Women's Association. It runs the gamut from a venison dish called Porcupines to actual porcupines—barbecued or apple-roasted—and features handy recipes for such classics as Blackfeet pemmican (moose or buffalo meat combined with fat and berries) and jerky, a survival food long before the advent of 7-Elevens.

Carolyn Niethammer, a collector of edible wild plants, wondered how Southwestern Indians survived on the arid land before there were supermarkets; in AMERICAN INDIAN COOKING (University of Nebraska) she reports that the Sonoran Desert is home to hundreds of edible plants, and advises cooks to get out there and find them. She includes recipes for agave chiffon pie, puffball casserole, Rocky Mountain beeweed (think collards), and a simple, fortifying acorn stew—one pound of meat, half a cup of acorn meal, salt, pepper, water. Be sure to leach the tannin out of your acorns, and remember to give thanks.

SERGIO RUZZIER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Foreground: Statue of King Menkaure and a Queen (detail), Dynasty 4, reign of Menkaure (ca. 2490-2472 B.C.).
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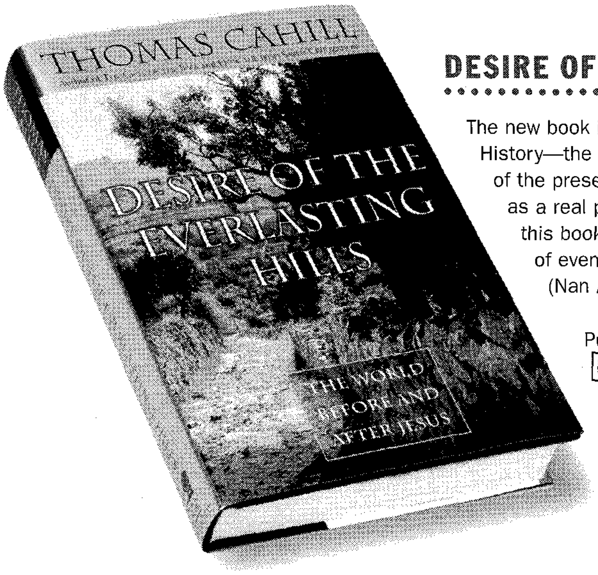
Books.

[AT BARNES & NOBLE]

Thomas Cahill: The Hinges of History


THOMAS CAHILL
DESIRE OF THE EVERLASTING HILLS
THE WORLD BEFORE AND AFTER JESUS

DESIRE OF THE EVERLASTING HILLS

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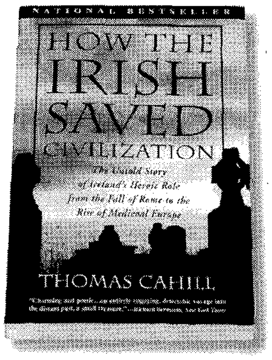
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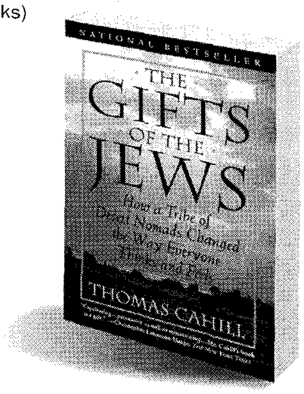
NATIONAL BESTSELLER
THE GIFTS OF THE JEWS
How a Tribe of Desert Nomads Changed the Way Everyone Thinks and Feels
THOMAS CAHILL

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ing the inner workings of pre-bop styles, but Payton is the one who sounds most comfortable playing them. Nov. 22: The MARIA SCHNEIDER JAZZ ORCHESTRA. Schnieder, a Gil Evans disciple, is an ingenious orchestrator who weaves thick textures while reserving plenty of space for some choice soloists. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through Nov. 21: Although ROBERTA FLACK has one of the most beautiful voices of her generation, with perfect diction and phrasing and a direct and heartfelt approach, in the seventies her predilection for schmalz easy-listened her into a corner. Still, "The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face" and "Killing Me Softly with His Song" are part of musical history, and she just might surprise us. Dining.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound pastel murals, and, through Dec. 31, BOBBY SHORT. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, BARBARA CARROLL is in attendance.

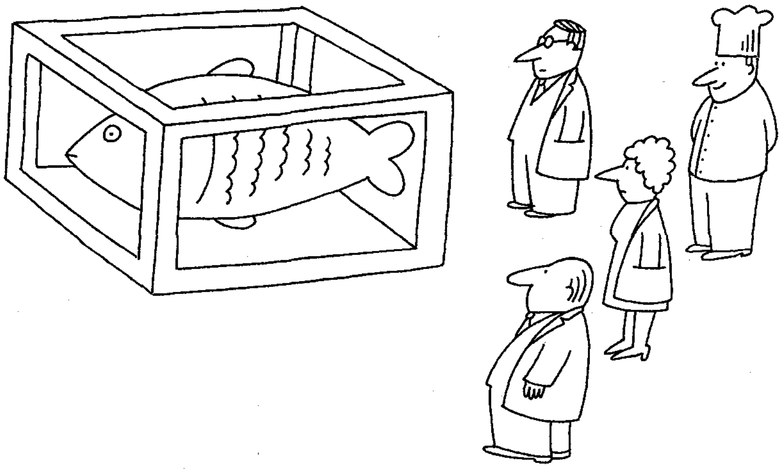
Iridium, 48 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Through Nov. 18: Bassist CHARLIE HADEN came to prominence as a charter member of Ornette Coleman's epochal free-jazz ensembles, but his devotion to the traditional verities trails him like a shadow; mainstream piano giant KENNY BARRON may have more of a taste for improvisation than we generally give him credit for (e.g., his surprising work with, who else, Ornette Coleman). As a duo, Haden and Barron find common ground exploring standards, as heard on their meditative duet recording, "Night and the City." Nov. 19-21: Haden will test his bebop chops when he hooks up with pianist BENNY GREEN, a dexterous Oscar Peterson protégé with funk proclivities. Mondays belong to electric-guitar innovator LES PAUL.

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Nov. 18: Singer NORA YORK'S clever conflations of iconic pop, jazz, gospel, and what-have-you are ingenious, but her affecting originals are what truly expose the quirky strength of this extravagant talent.

Makor, 35 W. 67th St. (601-1000)—Trumpeter DAVE DOUGLAS (here Nov. 17) is a virtuosic horn player who loves all kinds of music, and he's happy to let his myriad passions show directly in his work. He takes on free jazz, traditional jazz, Eastern European music, classical Indian idioms, electronic experimentation, and Burt Bacharach tunes (that's just the beginning) and makes it all work with an inclusive attitude backed up by solid and inspired musicianship. With his always engaging, often glorious, sounds, Douglas collapses the divisions between tradition and innovation. His fierce ensemble, which features the compelling saxophonist CHRIS POTTER and the slamming rhythm team of bassist ED HOWARD and drummer BEN PEROWSKY, is joined here by the visionary Dutch pianist MISHA MENGELBERG.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—Through Nov. 21: The HAMIETT BLUIETT group. Shunning the conventional range of his cumbersome instrument, Bluiett can coax unnatural and beautiful sounds from the baritone saxophone. Whether he's growling like a bullfrog or improvising in ambulance-siren tones, all of Bluiett's explorations are grounded in the bedrock of blues and gospel. Dining.

Up Over Jazz Cafe, 351 Flatbush Ave., at Seventh Ave., Brooklyn (718-398-5413)—Nov. 19-20: The ARTURO O'FARRILL quintet. His dad is Chico O'Farrill, one of the godfathers of Afro-Cuban jazz, thus pianist Arturo earned his Latin chops first hand. But he's also a persuasive mainstream player, steadily carving out an identity of his own.



CHARLES BARSOTTI

Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St. (576-2232)—Nov. 17-21: RANDY WESTON'S AFRICAN RHYTHMS QUINTET. With one foot in Africa and the other in the Big Apple, pianist and composer Weston combines the lyrical smarts of New York bebop with the rhythmic diversity of the African-American diaspora. Dining.

Joe's Pub, 425 Lafayette St. (539-8777)—Nov. 18-20: You can almost hear the grass on the savanna rustle as South African expatriate ABDULLAH IBRAHIM stirs up a lolling piano vamp; his trio rides its undulating rhythms expertly. Groove reigns here rather than technique—a welcome turn of events in jazz.

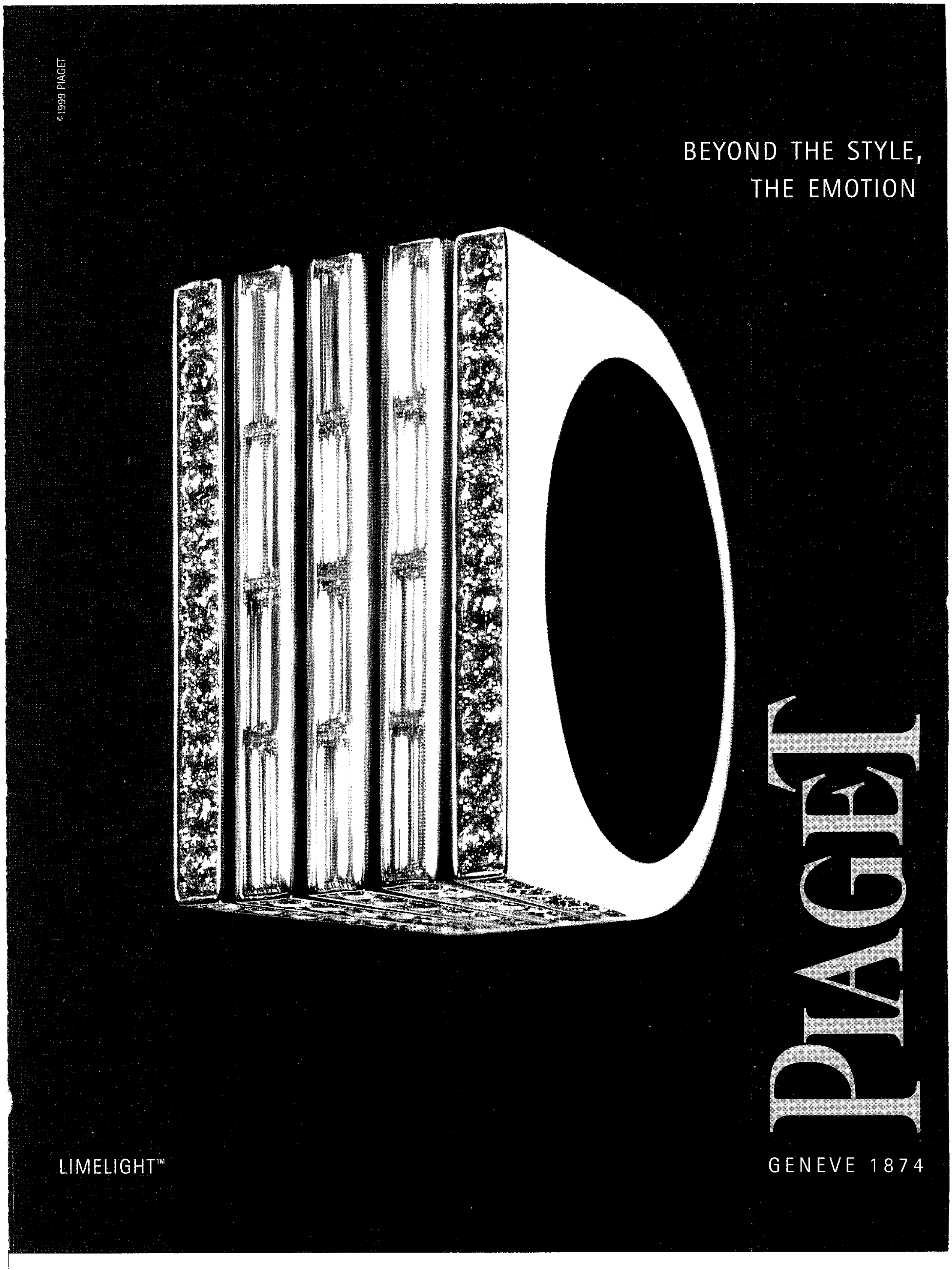
Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—Nov. 17-20: SIR ROLAND HANNA is one of the giants of Detroit's fertile piano delta. An Ellington scholar, a crackerjack blues player, and a knight of the Liberian government, Hanna is an open-armed stylist who can be as fastidious as he is funky. He's joined here by bassist PAUL WEST.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Through Nov. 21: While not exactly the contemporary versions of Lester Young and Billie Holiday, tenor saxophonist HOUSTON PERSON and vocalist ETTA JONES make fetching music together, a tradition that started more than thirty years ago. The VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA holds sway on Mondays.

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—"Portraits by Ingres: Image of an Epoch" offers forty paintings and ninety-two drawings of the nineteenth-century French élite. Through Jan. 2. . . . ¶ "Carleton Watkins: The Art of Perception" presents more than a hundred and twenty-five images by this pioneer of photography, who recorded the vastness of the American West.



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AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

Sotheby's—Nov. 17-18: Three sessions of contemporary art, including one of the eight replicas Duchamp had constructed of his famous "Fountain," the ready-made urinal he exhibited in the 1917 New York Armory Show. . . . ¶ Nov. 19: African and Oceanic art. . . . ¶ Nov. 19-20: Sotheby's is billing an oenophile's collection that goes on sale through five sessions as "the greatest private wine cellar in the world," and a look through the catalogue makes one wonder if that may actually be true. . . . ¶ Nov. 22: Pre-Columbian art. . . . ¶ Nov. 23-24: Latin-American art works, highlighted by Matta's "Morphologie" (from 1939) and a large selection of Surrealist pieces. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7000.)

Christie's—Nov. 17: The conclusion of a sale of contemporary art; also an auction of ceramics. . . . ¶ Nov. 18: French furniture, including a notable Louis XIV Savonnerie carpet made in the sixteen-seventies for the grand galleries of Versailles. . . ¶ Nov. 18: Coins. . . . ¶ Nov. 19: Stamps. . . . ¶ Nov. 22-23: Latin-American paintings, including important pieces by Botero and Tamayo. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 636-2000.)

Fall Antiques Show—More than sixty dealers from throughout the United States gather for this high-end show. (69th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 66th St. Nov. 18-21, with a benefit preview on Nov. 17. For information, call 472-0590.)

Triple Pier Expo—More than six hundred antiques dealers gather for the second of two weekends. (Piers 88, 90, and 92, Twelfth Ave. between 48th and 52nd Sts. Nov. 20-21. For information, call 255-0020.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

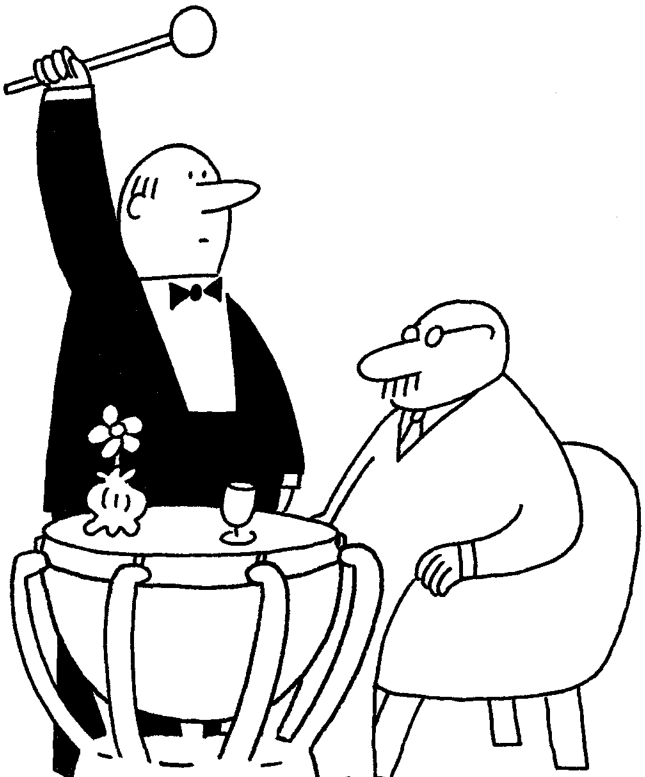
Michael Ackerman—Ghostly black-and-white photographs that have an uneasy dreamlike effect, and a complicated sense of intimacy. In a series of interior images in Paris, the camera intrudes on the private moments of a dark-haired woman—crouched on a toilet, lying nude on a bed—and an undercurrent of self-consciousness hints at pornography. On a street in Benares, India, an old man exposes his body by opening up a towel like wings, but he walks with his eyes cast downward, as though he were defying the camera. Through Nov. 30. (Bodell, 13 E. 7th St. 477-1820. Open Tuesdays through Sundays, noon to 7.)

Bill Owens—Black-and-white photographs from Owens's landmark book, "Suburbia." Through Dec. 4. (Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. 334-0010.)

"Walker Evans at *Fortune*"—Works made during Evans's twenty years (1945-65) as staff photographer and photo editor at *Fortune*. Through Dec. 4. (Gallery 292, at 120 Wooster St. 431-0292.)

Short List—**GWEN AKIN AND ALLAN LUDWIG**, Ricco/Maresca, 529 W. 20th St. 627-4819. Through Nov. 20. . . . **TOM BARIL**, Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. 517-3766. Through Dec. 11. . . . **TINA BARNEY**, Borden, 560 Broadway. 431-0166. Through Dec. 18. . . . **OLIVER BOBERG**, Morris, 465 W. 23rd St. 727-2752. Through Nov. 27. . . . **MASAHISA FUKASE**, Mann, 210 Eleventh Ave., at 25th St. 989-7600. Through Dec. 11. . . . **TIMOTHY GREENFIELD-SANDERS**, Boone, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 752-2929. Through Dec. 18. . . . **PAUL HIMMEL** and **ERWIN BLUMENFELD**, Danziger, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. 734-5300. Both shows through Nov. 27. . . . **MIKE SMITH** and **MARK STEINMETZ**, Richardson, 560 Broadway. 343-1255. Both shows through Nov. 27. . . . **JERRY UELSMANN**, Laurence Miller, 20 W. 57th St. 397-3930. Through Dec. 24.

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum.)



CHARLES BARSOTTI

CLASSICAL MUSIC

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—Boito's **MEFISTOFELE**, with Veronica Villarroel, Richard Leech, and Samuel Ramey; conducted by Mark Elder. (Nov. 17 and Nov. 20 at 8.) . . . **OTELLO**, with Gabriela Beňačkova, Vladimir Bogachov, and Sergei Leiferkus; Mr. Elder. (Nov. 18 and Nov. 23 at 8.) . . . **TOSCA**, with Eva Marton, Kristján Jóhannsson, and Juan Pons; Daniel Oren. (Nov. 19 at 8:30.) . . . **AIDA**, with Sharon Sweet, Dolora Zajick, Richard Margison, and Simon Estes; Paul Nadler. (Nov. 20 at 1:30.) . . . **TRISTAN UND ISOLDE**, in the opening performance of a new production, with Jane Eaglen, Katarina Dalayman, Ben Heppner, Monte Pederson, and René Pape; James Levine. (Nov. 22 at 6:30.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

New York City Opera—Final performances of the fall season. Nov. 17 at 7:30 and Nov. 19 at 8: "Falstaff." . . . ¶ Nov. 18 at 7:30 and Nov. 21 at 1:30: "Central Park," a trilogy of one-act operas by Deborah Drattell, Michael Torke, and Robert Beaser. . . . ¶ Nov. 20 at 1:30: "Carmen." . . . ¶ Nov. 20 at 8: "The Abduction from the Seraglio," sung in English. (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

Opera Nova—The revisionist troupe presents its take on "Carmen," who here tosses her rose at Don José (a New York City cop) and gets a ticket for littering. Sung in French, with English dialogue. (Sanford Meisner Theatre, 164 Eleventh Ave., at 22nd St. Nov. 17-19 at 7:30, Nov. 20 at 2 and 7:30, and Nov. 21 at 3. For information about tickets, call 724-8204.)

Juilliard Opera Center—Presenting a fully staged production of Gluck's "Armide." (Juilliard Theatre, 155 W. 65th St. 769-7406. Nov. 17 and Nov. 19 at 8 and Nov. 21 at 2.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—At Avery Fisher Hall. Nov. 18-20 at 8: Kurt Masur conducts the première of Giya Kancheli's "And Farewell Goes Out Sighing . . .," for Violin, Countertenor, and Orchestra, the last of the six new works the orchestra has commissioned through its "Messages for the Millennium" program. Gidon Kremer is the solo violinist and Derek Lee Ragin the countertenor. Also on the program is Bruckner's Symphony No. 7, presented by Mr. Masur in the rather infrequently performed Robert Haas edition, which removes certain textual accretions that did not figure in the composer's original conception of the piece. . . . ¶ Nov. 20 at 2: An all-Copland Young People's Concert, conducted by Bobby McFerrin, with soprano Harolyn Blackwell as soloist. (875-5030.)

New York Virtuosi Chamber Symphony—Kenneth Klein leads an all-Beethoven program that includes the Piano Concerto No. 5 (with Gerald Robbins) and the "Egmont" incidental music (with Regina Resnick narrating). (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. Nov. 17 at 8.)

Voices of Ascension—Dennis Keene directs Renaissance choral works. (Church of the Ascension, Fifth Ave. at 10th St. 358-1469. Nov. 18 at 8.)

"PoulencPlus!"—The centennial festival continues with a program of the composer's "Litanies à la Vierge Noire," Mass in G, Organ Concerto (featuring Nancianne Parrella), and "Gloria." Joseph Flummerfelt and Kent Tritle take turns on the podium directing the Westminster Choir and the Choir and Orchestra of St. Ignatius Loyola. (Church of St. Ignatius Loyola, Park Ave. at 84th St. 288-2520. Nov. 19 at 8.)

Schoenberg Alert—Dodecaphonists may revel in an in-town extension of the Bard Festival's Schoenberg blowout of this past August. Nov. 20 at 10 A.M.: A symposium on Schoenberg in Vienna and America. (Kaplan Penthouse, Lincoln Center.) . . . ¶ At 2:30: His Phantasy for Violin and Piano (Op. 47) and his String Trio (Op. 45), in addition to solo and chamber works by Marc Blitzstein, Leon Kirchner, and others. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050.) . . . ¶ At 8: The American Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Leon Botstein, re-creates a program that caused a near-riot when it was originally performed in Vienna, in 1913: Schoenberg's Chamber Symphony, Mahler's Kindertotenlieder (with soprano Edith Wiens and contralto Ewa Podleś), and pieces by Zemlinsky, Berg, and Webern (his Six Pieces for Orchestra, Op. 6). (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050.)

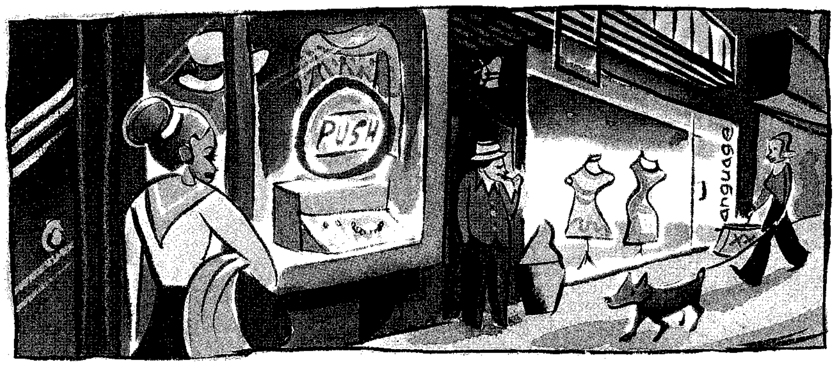
Harmonie Ensemble/New York—Steven Richman leads a tribute to the baritone, composer, and arranger Harry Burleigh, who died fifty years ago following a long career that included serving as an assistant to Dvořák (several of whose works will also be performed). (St. George's Church, 207 E. 16th St. Nov. 20 at 2:30. No tickets necessary.)

Cerddorion Vocal Ensemble—Susanne Peck directs English choral works of a pastoral persuasion, by Vaughan Williams (his Mass), Elgar, Britten, and Delius. (St. Luke In-the-Fields, 487 Hudson St., at Grove St. Nov. 21 at 4. Tickets at the door.)

ON AND OFF THE AVENUE

Mulberry Harvest

THE bouncy economy that has brought bistros to Avenue B and boutiques to the meat-packing district has lately endowed Little Italy with a new name—NoLita—and a passel of upscale shops. So swiftly have these changes come to Mulberry Street that venders hawking Macarena-dancing Santas now find themselves camped outside places offering couture baby buntings and custom-tailored bikinis.



MARCELLUS HALL

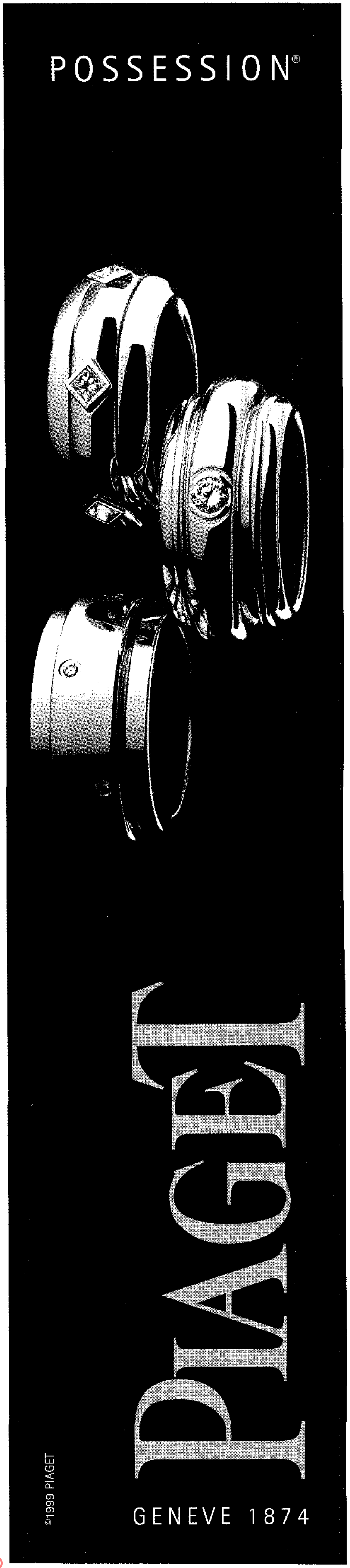
At 247 Mulberry, formerly the site of John Gotti's Ravenite social club, **Amy Chan** (966-3417) has banished the card tables and knotty pine and laid in an amusing selection of satchels, including examples made from sari silk coated with miniature plastic tiles, which looks like a cross between a Byzantine mosaic and a suburban kitchen counter. A reticule in gold and cerulean blue ($110) is just big enough to conceal a pack of Luckys and a platinum compact, should one of Mr. Gotti's erstwhile molls wander in looking for a new purse.

Language (238 Mulberry St.; 431-5566), a sprawling expanse with an art gallery on the premises, courts customers too young and carefree to have ever given a thought to the neighborhood's checkered past. Avant-garde interpretations of the season's trends include an ivory wool poncho trimmed with navy piping and tiny mirrors ($375) and a peasant blouse realized in gray flannel ($350). Those ubiquitous pashminas also make an appearance, here at least individualized with lavish iridescent-bead fringe ($350).

Across the street, the insouciant **Tracy Feith** (209 Mulberry St.; 334-3097) has a party dress whose débutante-worthy white piqué skirt has been subverted by a scoop-necked bodice of maroon polar fleece and a smattering of unmatched stone buttons ($1,125). If fleece and piqué make you want to dance all night, there are ballet slippers in a slew of unusual shades ($200). Far hardier is the footwear at **Shoe** (197 Mulberry St.; 941-0205), a newly opened spot selling handmade, genderless creations by Cydwoq, a Burbank, California, company founded by an architect who took up cobbling as a hobby. A pair of square-toed, rough-hewn black suède shoes lace up over the instep and sport silver-dollar-pancake heels ($160); cordovan booties have diagonal straps and elfin toes that curve gently cuffward ($195).

At number 240, the owners of the jewelry store **Push** (965-9699) are attempting to turn what was once Frankie's Deli into "a dark, cavernous ship." And what a strange vessel it is: a hollowed-out Zenith console radio has been fitted with a glass vitrine, the better to show off faceted emerald necklaces with rose-gold clasps ($925); a similarly eviscerated pipe organ displays, among other fripperies, pairs of interlocking rings so delicate they would suit the subject of an Ingres portrait. In gold with small diamonds, the duo will set you back about $2,400; a silver-and-turquoise combination is a relative bargain, at $340.

The energetic proprietress of **Red Wong** (181 Mulberry St., 625-1638) has let stand remnants of the original décor which were uncovered during her renovation process, and the result is a history of a hundred years of the neighborhood seen through a prism of striped and flowered wallpaper. On the racks, a similar eclecticism prevails: sweaters made of three different kinds of wool have curious holes that lend a punk-spiderweb air ($180-$335); a demure, ankle-length silk jacquard skirt printed with Chinese prayers gathers into a modified bustle ($185). Less ambitious shoppers might settle for a chunky hand-knit orange muffler that fastens under the chin with a silly crocheted flower ($135)—in its cheery practicality, it's not all that different from the neckwear favored by those Chinese and Italian grannies still bustling to and fro on Mulberry Street.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RECITALS

Boston Camerata—The ensemble, directed by Joel Cohen, is joined by six of the seven Shakers of Sabbathday Lake, in Maine, the last practicing Shaker community in existence, for a performance of music from their religious practice. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Nov. 17 at 8.)

Robert Taub—The pianist performs Beethoven's sonatas in E Minor (Op. 90), E-Flat Major (Op. 31, No. 3), C Minor (Op. 13, the "Pathétique"), and A-Flat Major (Op. 110). (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. Nov. 17 at 8.)

Rafael Figueroa and Richard Bishop—Mr. Figueroa, co-principal cellist of the Metropolitan Opera, plays Gaspar Cassado's Suite for Violoncello, pianist Richard Bishop performs Beethoven's Piano Sonata in D Minor (Op. 31, No. 2), and the two musicians join for Brahms's F-Major Cello Sonata. (Kosciuszko Foundation, 15 E. 65th St. Nov. 17 at 8. For information about tickets, call 279-4200.)

Bargemusic—Presenting Haydn's String Quartet in F Minor (Op. 20, No. 5), Fauré's "La Bonne Chanson" (with mezzo-soprano Janice Felty), Chausson's "Chanson Perpetuelle," and Ravel's Piano Trio. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-4061. Nov. 18 at 7:30 and Nov. 21 at 4.)

Ensemble Sospeso—The modern-music group, assisted by sound technicians from Paris's IRCAM center, performs music by Tristan Murail and Magnus Lindberg. Jeffrey Milarski conducts. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Nov. 18 at 8.)

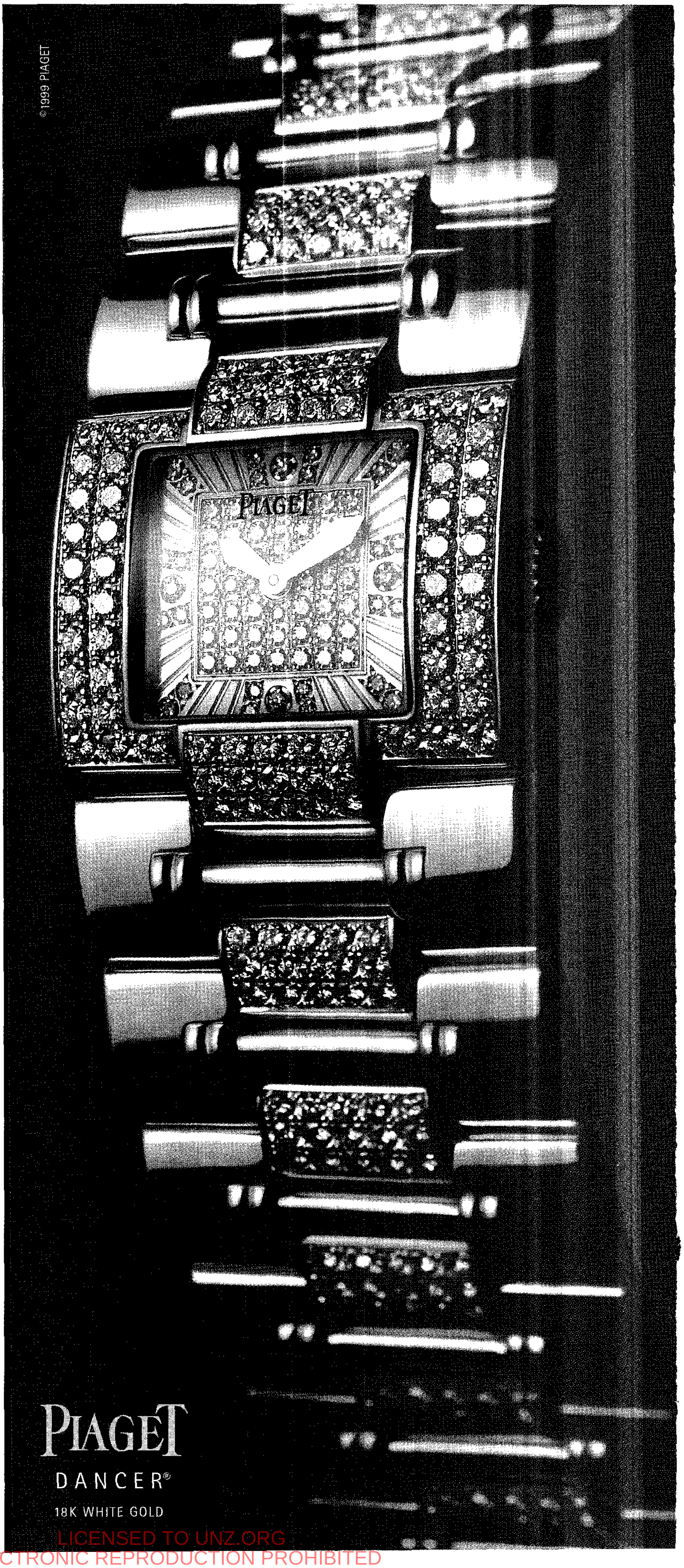
Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—Nov. 18 at 6:45: Presenting Britten's Cello Sonata (Op. 65) and Respighi's Violin Sonata in an intimate setting. (Rose Rehearsal Studio, Rose Building, Lincoln Center. For information about tickets, call 875-5788.) . . . ¶ Nov. 19 at 8 and Nov. 21 at 5: The society's bassoonist, Milan Turkovic, is one of the world's few practitioners of the instrument to have built a substantial career independent of an orchestral appointment. He did put in his time in orchestral ranks, as the Vienna Symphony's principal bassoonist, before he set out as a freelance fifteen years ago. In this concert, he participates in such pieces as Vivaldi's "La Notte" Concerto, Glinka's "Trio Pathétique," and Françaix's Divertissement for Bassoon and String Quartet. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050.)

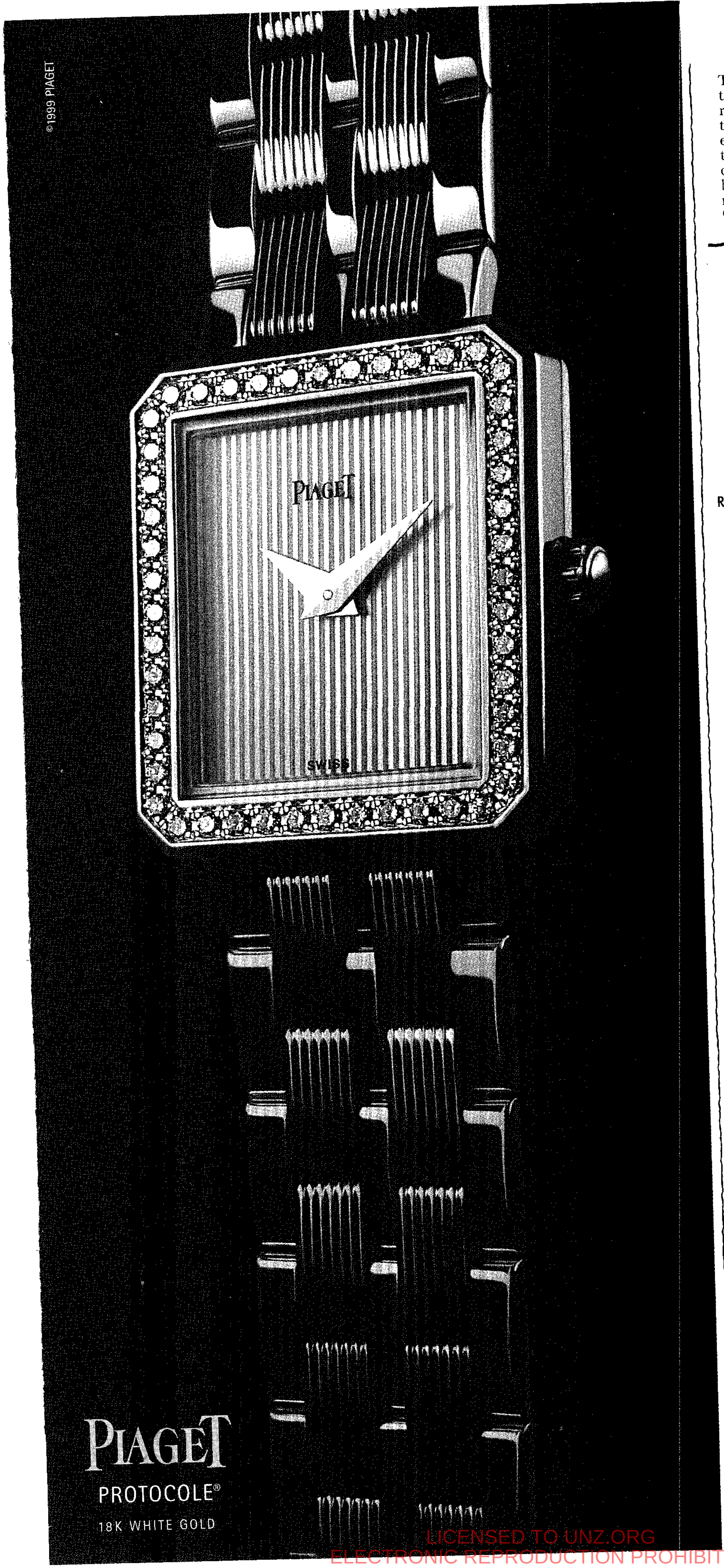
Ensemble Intercontemporain—At Carnegie Hall, Pierre Boulez conducting. Nov. 19 at 8: Schoenberg's Chamber Symphony No. 1 and Suite (Op. 29), with participants in a modern-music seminar underway at Carnegie Hall eking out the performing forces. . . . ¶ Nov. 20 at 8: Berio's "Linea," Schoenberg's Suite (Op. 29), and Boulez's own "Sur Incises." . . . ¶ Nov. 21 at 3: An all-Boulez program that includes his "Douze Notations," "Incises," and "Anthèmes II." (247-7800.)

Sonic Boom Festival—New York's annual fall contemporary-music festival continues as the Continuum ensemble offers several music-theatre works by Francis Schwartz, in addition to pieces by John Cage, Jon Deak, and Joan LaBarbara. (Great Hall, Cooper Union, Third Ave. at 7th St. Nov. 20 at 8. For information about tickets, call 279-4200.)

David Krakauer and Brian Zeger—The clarinettist and the pianist perform music by Messiaen, Debussy, and Brahms (his Sonata No. 1), in addition to klezmer selections. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. Nov. 20 at 8.)

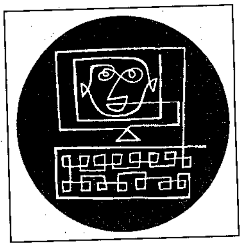
Guarneri Quartet—The foursome plays string quartets by Mozart (in C Major, K. 465, the "Dissonance"), Mendels-





Through Jan. 9. . . . ¶ "Egyptian Art in the Age of the Pyramids," a sombre and ravishing survey of five hundred years of the millennia of Egyptian dynasties, covers the Old Kingdom (2650-2150 B.C.), the glorious formative period of Pharaonic art when the great pyramids were built and religious statuary rose to a refined naturalism. Through Jan. 9. . . . ¶ "Daido Moriyama: Hunter," an exhibition of forty photographs made in post-war Japan. Through Jan. 2. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

ONLY CONNECT



Roy Rogers–Dale Evans (http://www.royrogers.com)—Anyone who grew up in the forties and fifties probably remembers the singing cowboy, in pursuit of rustlers and other varmints, on the back of his rearing horse, Trigger. It was an image that began his TV show and adorned countless cereal boxes, comic books, and lunch pails. But in the minds of most baby boomers it's probably a hazy, remote image, part of ancient history—like Davy Crockett coonskin caps and Mouseketeer ears.

Which is why it seems so remarkable to find the familiar silhouette on a Day-Glo rainbow T-shirt proclaiming "Roy Rogers: King of the Internet Cowboys." Rogers, who died in 1998, probably didn't spend a lot of time surfing the Web, and it's doubtful that his widow, Dale Evans, does either. But the museum that honors them both, in Victorville, California, is well represented on this site, where you can view everything from an image of Trigger, stuffed and mounted for eternal viewing (sort of like Lenin), to a photo of Dale's Y2K Christmas ornament. (The ornament and T-shirt can be purchased on-line; Trigger cannot.)

The museum, which moved to Victorville from Apple Valley in 1976, is a result of Rogers's pack-rat tendencies. "For nearly as long as I can remember," he wrote in the museum notes, "I thought about having a museum. I've always liked to save things. No matter what came my way, whether it was a letter from a boy or girl movie fan or from a President, or a nice shotgun or an old-time telephone, I stuck it in the basement, or the garage, or in drawers at home." No matter how you feel about sticking shotguns in drawers, if you ever thrilled to the rather predictable adventures of Roy and Dale at the Double R Ranch you'll want to visit this site. Check out the Rodeo Pattern dishes and Little Buckaroo place setting. They make Fiestaware look so tired.

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—MOMA ushers in the new millennium with a seventeen-month-long series of shows, all culled from the museum's permanent collection. "Modern Starts," the first of three installments, celebrates the advent of modernism and is itself divided into three sections. "People," with six sections of its own, opens the on-

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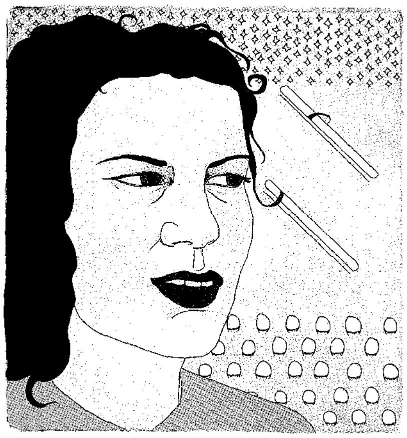
slaught, and "Places" and "Things" follow; the entire extravaganza makes the Ring Cycle seem like a miniseries. This segment, devoted to the representation of the human figure, focusses on the period from 1880 to 1920, largely ignoring the tenets of art history in favor of exhilarating, and occasionally exasperating, pairings. Crowd pleasers abound: an Arp beside a Miró, a Klimt next to a van Gogh, a Toulouse-Lautrec and a Braque, as well as a cavalcade of works by Picasso and Matisse, whose "Les Demoiselles d'Avignon" and "The Piano Lesson" hang side by side. In addition to paintings, there are fine examples of sculpture, notably a roomful of bronzes presided over by Rodin's sloping masterpiece, "Monument to Balzac." Photographs are scattered throughout the galleries, but in "Posed and Unposed," a tepid section devoted exclusively to that medium, the show falters. Through Feb. 1. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 10:30 to 5:45; Fridays, 10:30 to 8:15.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—A retrospective devoted to the Neapolitan painter Francesco Clemente presents more than two hundred paintings, frescoes, watercolors, pastels, sculptures, illustrations, and collaborative works. Through Jan. 9. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 9 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 9 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—Part two of "The American Century" is a vast improvement over its predecessor, and not just because American art gathered momentum after the Second World War. The exhibition design as a whole is clearer: film clips and "historical" displays have been segregated to small side rooms, so they don't compete directly with the nearly seven hundred art works. On the upper floors, curator Lisa Phillips succeeds in making the familiar stories of Minimalism and Abstract Expressionism feel almost new. Through Feb. 13. (Open Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM AT PHILIP MORRIS, 120 Park Ave., at 42nd St. (878-2550)—"Gravity's Rainbow," Fred Tomaselli's five-panel, eight-by-twenty-foot homage to the Thomas Pynchon novel, is a monument to sophisticated, psychedelic beauty. Tomaselli's most ambitious work to date features repeatedly dipping arcs made of a dazzling array of pills, hemp, datura leaves, images clipped from field guides, and bright-hued paint "placebos." This artistic use of psychoactives (encased in industrial resin) turns controversial material into eye candy. Held in suspended animation, strands of exotic parakeets and necklaces of prescription drugs take the same legal, retinal route to the brain. Through Jan. 7. (Open weekdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 7:30.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART, Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—"Eastman Johnson: Painting America" is a fascinating retrospective exhibition, the first in more than twenty-five years, of Winslow Homer's greatest rival. In many ways, the two Yankee painters were similar: both trained in Boston print shops, painted firsthand scenes of the Civil War, and made pioneering images of newly emancipated slaves. During most of their lifetimes, however, Johnson, twelve years older, was by far the more established and successful artist. Several of Homer's best-loved early canvases (notably "Snap the Whip") were almost certainly modelled on paintings by Johnson. In later life, however, Johnson settled into a sentimental tidiness, delighting in modest delicacies of chiaroscuro, texture, and color. "Of all our artists he has the most coquetry of manipulation," Henry James wrote. There are dozens of impressive works here, including his masterpiece "The Cranberry Pickers," but none that really belies James's gentle dismissal. Through Feb. 6. . . . ¶ "Sensation: Young British Artists from the Saatchi Collection," the provocative show from London's Royal Academy in London, offers paintings, sculptures, photographs, and installations by Damien Hirst, the Chapman Brothers, Jenny Saville, Chris Ofili, Mona Hatoum, Rachel Whiteread, and other baddies from the sceptered isle. Through Jan. 9. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)



HOME ON THE RANGE: *Twenty-four years ago, the Palestinian artist Mona Hatoum flew from Lebanon, where she had grown up, to London for a vacation. When war broke out at home, she found herself in exile. With nothing to do but wait, she attended art school and eventually established a name for herself as one of the more politically vibrant young performance artists on the British art scene. In the nineties, she switched to sculpture but continued to address issues of dislocation, in works both unnerving and weirdly funny: a lush carpet made of straight pins, a daybed fashioned from steel plates. In "Home," the centerpiece of her new show at Alexander and Bonin (through December 4), an electrical current passes through a "circuit" of metal kitchen utensils, which glow menacingly on a kitchen table.*

LARA TOMLIN

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

PAUL CÉZANNE (1839-1906)—A thrilling display of nearly fifty watercolors, ranging from decisive early efforts to his late, magnificently tentative still-lifes and landscapes. With plenty of untouched areas of white paper, these later, quasi-abstract works are among Cézanne's most economical. For the historically minded, they shine with intimations of subsequent art: Delaunay, Braque, Bonnard, Mondrian. Through Nov. 24. (Acquavella, 18 E. 79th St. 7334-6300. Open Mondays.)

MORRIS LOUIS (1912-62)—Now that bell-bottoms are back, maybe these rainbow-colored abstractions, with their vaguely embarrassing tie-dyed prettiness, can count as Zeitgeisty again. That seems to be the hope behind this thoughtfully selected show, which offers examples of each of Louis's favorite pouring patterns, including three varieties of stripes (straight, swirled, or diagonal) and a deliriously trippy, Lava-lampish painting from his "Veil" series. They look radiant and restful, but it's hard to think of them as more than a kind of liquified graphic design. Through Dec. 4. (Ameringer Howard, 41 E. 57th St. 935-1110.)

Saul Steinberg (1914-99)—Following Pace Wildenstein's recent, lavishly installed survey, this more modest but still extensive sampling offers a delightful range of drawings and assemblages from the fifties through the eighties. Several of the artist's most typical and resonant images are here, including a letter "E" dreaming of a more elegant, accented version of herself, and a festively paranoid view of "Bleeker" Street circa 1970, originally intended as a cover for this magazine. But there are also plenty of intriguingly private, introspective drawings. In one, a jazzy, elaborate rendering of the word "Body" perches precariously over a much leaner, fragile companion: not "Soul" but "Saul." Through Dec. 18. (Baumgold, 128 E. 72nd St. 861-7338.)

Short List—**MILTON AVERY,** Lubin House, 11 E. 61st St. 826-0320. Through Nov. 20. . . . **LEE BONTECOU,** Castelli, 59 E. 79th St. 249-4470. Through Nov. 24. . . . **GIULIO ROMANO,** Leubsdorf Gallery, Hunter College, Lexington Ave. at 68th St. 772-4991. Open daily, except Sundays, 1 to 6; through Nov. 27. . . . **JOHN WONNACOTT,** Hirschl & Adler, 21 E. 70th St. 535-8810. Through Nov. 20.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

Marco Brambilla—"Approach," an exceptionally fine video installation filmed at Kennedy Airport. Across four monitors, we watch a sequence of sleepy and dishevelled figures walk from customs to the arrivals hall. The camera zooms in just as each traveller, recognizing friends or relatives on our side of the camera, responds with stirrings of relief and pleasure—they've stepped from anonymity to intimacy. Though it's presented in slow motion, the effect is a little bit like watching a speeded-up film of flowers blossoming; you can't help feeling a complicit warmth. Through Nov. 27. (Henry Urbach Architecture, 526 W. 26th St. 627-0974.)

John Currin—New paintings of women by this wry hipster/reactionary, certainly the most perverse and gifted artist of his generation. On view are images of aging yuppies, aproned homemakers, and various neo-Mannerist nudes, painted with a caressing loveliness that challenges Parmigianino on his own turf. In the show's flagship painting, a dazzling strawberry blonde stands before a milk-white background, smiling as polychromatic butterflies—evidently as smitten as we are—flutter around her. It's an ode to Beauty, of course, but also a testament to the male heterosexual's secretly feminine heart. Through Dec. 4. (Rosen, 525 W. 24th St. 627-6000.)

Carroll Dunham—Eight new aggressively colored, cartoony paintings featuring Dunham's usual cast of raging homunculi. Flat-topped, horse-toothed, and eyeless, Dunham's psycho-killer beings menace each other with testicled clubs and phallic pistols in an endless Punch-and-Judy routine. Set down in thudding combinations of black, orange, ultramarine, and lemon yellow, the creatures cavort on simplified boats, buildings, and globes, scrawled over with graphic skeins that read like verbal outbursts. One painting, "Ship," is a dystopic "Raft of the Medusa." Through Dec. 4. (Metro Pictures, 519 W. 24th St. 206-7100.)

Mona Hatoum—Discomfort and danger lurk in every domestically scaled object on view in this elegant installation of austere sculpture—a ménage à trois of minimalism, surrealism, and feminism. Through Dec. 4. (Alexander and Bonin, 132 Tenth Ave., at 18th St. 367-7474.)

Antonio Murado—Paintings by this Spanish artist featuring radiant, near monochromatic backgrounds and coiled, organic forms. In each of his seven works, the artist traces all-over, spiralling lines to the edges of carefully prepared fields of color. The resulting canvases hint at shifting microscopic cell structures or moving leaves atop Murado's resinated, pondlike surfaces. One painting casts blood-red arcs over a dark-green plane, giving the impression of movement. The loosely repeated forms, as in Oriental rugs and Moorish ornamentation, suggest an arabesque shorthand for the teeming life of the universe. Through Dec. 30. (Schoormans, 508 W. 26th St. 243-3159.)

John Wesley—"Irish Paintings." New works by a highly original artist whose pared-down technique—flat figures, outlined in black and painted in a matte palette dominated by confectionery pinks and blues—hasn't wavered in thirty-six years. The style is a cross between the Sunday funnies—Dagwood Bumstead is a frequent subject—and ukiyo-e woodcuts (the Japanese term translates as "floating world," which could serve as the title of his entire œuvre). The eight canvases installed here, which the New York-based artist painted in Ireland over the past year, range from "Pacific," featuring a pair of petulant Asian women, their pink flesh punctuated by red lips, nails, and nipples, to "Wow! Whoops! Oh Boy!," in which a goofy bird flails in midair above a Hokusai wave. They're baffling delights. Through Dec. 4. (Fredericks, 504 W. 22nd St. 633-6555.)

Short List—**JACQUELINE HUMPHRIES,** Greene Naftali, 526 W. 26th St. 463-7770. Through Nov. 27. . . . **DAVID REED,** Protetch, 511 W. 22nd St. 633-6999. Through Nov. 27. . . . **PETER SARKISIAN,** I-20, 529 W. 20th St. 645-1100. Through Nov. 20.

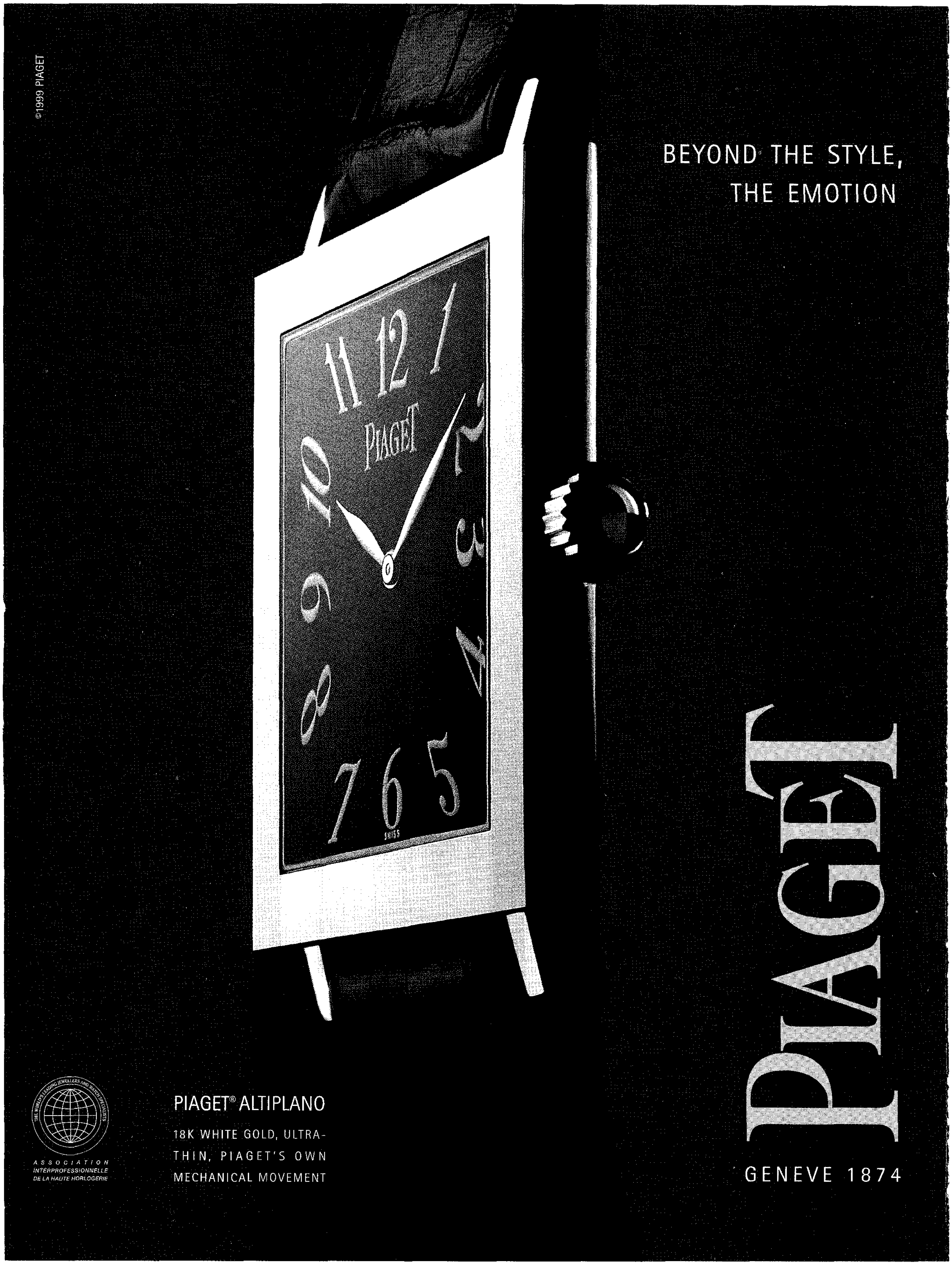
GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

Yoshitomo Nara—The New York début of a Japanese-born, Cologne-based artist whose deceptively simple paintings of big-headed children are at once sweet and sinister. There's a don't-mess-with-me aura about these moon-faced imps, reinforced by titles like "Pyromaniac in the Daytime." Nara is a subtle colorist, with celadon greens and creamy yellows offset by russets and browns. The portraits' stylized cartoon features are inspired by Japanese *manga*, or comic books, but some are oddly reminiscent of Modigliani, most notably "Night Cat," the vixen of the group, whose vampire fangs discreetly poke out at the corners of her tiny mouth. Through Nov. 20. (Boesky, 51 Greene St., 941-9888.)

"Foul Play"—An elliptical exhibition of paintings, sculptures, videos, and photographs by twenty international artists, some emerging (Jun Iseyama, Michelle Lopez), others established (Ida Applebroog, Lawrence Weiner). Highlights include elegant platinum prints of freeway ramps by Catherine Opie, a dramatic still-life painting by Blake Rayne, and a haunting photograph by Jeff Wall of a nondescript man in a nondescript hallway. Loose affiliations and free association are the standard stuff of group shows, but Asia Ingalls and Cheryl Kaplan carry their curatorial prerogative to an extreme, amassing works that have little conceptual or formal overlap. The result is fragmentation to the point of frustration, which just might be the point. To quote the accompanying poster, "Ambiguity is foul play." Through Nov. 20. (Thread Waxing Space, 476 Broadway. 966-9520.)

Short List—**RICHARD ARTSCHWAGER,** Lehmann Maupin, 39 Greene St. 965-0753. Through Dec. 18. . . . **GORDON MATTA-CLARK,** Zwirner, 43 Greene St. 966-9074. Through Dec. 24.

"He's a typical Californian who doesn't know how to relax," by Bill Owens, at Greenberg.



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sohn (in A Minor, Op. 13), and Fauré (in E Minor, (Op. 121). (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Nov. 20 at 8.)

Pamela Frank—The violinist is assisted by her father, the pianist Claude Frank, in Beethoven's Sonatas in A Minor (Op. 23), G Major (Op. 96), and A Major (Op. 47, the "Kreutzer"). (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Nov. 20 at 8:30.)

Christine Schäfer—The soprano, assisted by pianist Eric Schneider, performs Wolf's Mörike-lieder" and Messiaen's "Poèmes pour Mi." (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Nov. 21 at 2.)

Vladimir Feltsman—The pianist, in an all-Schumann recital. (Whitman Theatre, Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts, Brooklyn College. 718-951-4500. Nov. 21 at 2.)

Dae San No—The Cardiff Singer of the World Competition boasts an impressive record of discovering and launching exceptional artists; in recent memory, the prize-winners have included the baritones Dmitri Hvorostovsky and Bryn Terfel. Another baritone, Dae San No, from Korea, captured the lieder award at this year's competition, and this week he presents his New York début recital, with a program of songs by Debussy, Finzi, Schumann, and several others. Pianist Laura Ward assists. (Kosciuszko Foundation, 15 E. 65th St. 734-2130. Nov. 21 at 3.)

Mitsuko Uchida—The pianist performs Chopin's B-Flat-Minor Sonata, Webern's Variations (Op. 27), Mozart's Adagio in B Minor (K. 540), and Schubert's D-Major Sonata (D. 850). (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Nov. 22 at 7:30.)

Kremerata Baltica Soloists—The constituents of Lincoln Center enter into so few collaborations with one another that this recital—presented jointly by the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, the New York Philharmonic, and Lincoln Center Presents Great Performers—is as notable for the laudable administrative coöperation that brought it about as for the brave program itself: works by Peteris Vasks, Ennio Morricone, Giya Kancheli, Alfred Schnittke (his String Trio), and Astor Piazzolla, performed by violinist Gidon Kremer, violist Ula Ulijona, and cellist Marta Sudraba. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Nov. 23 at 8.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Readings—Nov. 18 at 6: By writers Stephen Schiff, Feenie Ziner, and James Parks Morton, the former dean of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, from the works of Mary Poppins creator P. L. Travers. (Donnell Library Center, 20 W. 53rd St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Nov. 18 at 7: By Irish journalist Nuala O'Faolain ("Are You Somebody? The Accidental Memoir of a Dublin Woman"), from her recent fiction. (Glucksman Ireland House, New York University, One Washington Mews. For more information, call 998-3950.) . . . ¶ Nov. 19 at 7: By poets Cole Swensen and John Yau. (Dia Center for the Arts, 548 W. 22nd St. 989-5566.)

Talks—Nov. 16 at 6: Architect Robert A. M. Stern joins his co-authors of "New York 1880," Thomas Melins and David Fishman, for a slide presentation and discussion about the history of New York City. (St. Ann's Church, 157 Montague St., Brooklyn. For reservations, which are required, call 718-254-9830.) . . . ¶ Nov. 17 at 6: Philip Lentz, of *Crain's Business Weekly*, moderates a panel discussion about President Clinton's influence on politics, with writers Jonathan Alter (*Newsweek*), Elizabeth Kolbert (*The New Yorker*), and others. (New School, 66 W. 12th St. 229-5689.) . . . ¶ Nov. 18 at 7:30: Henry Louis Gates, Jr., discusses his new book, "Wonders of the African World." (Barnes & Noble, 33 E. 17th St. No tickets necessary.)

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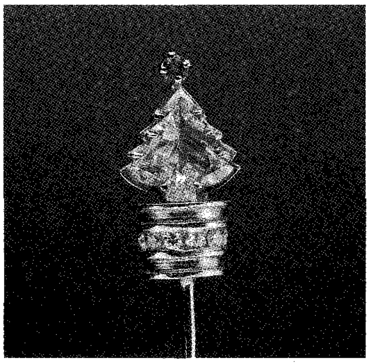

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Viewing: November 19–22
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Important Design Sale
Auction: November 27
Viewing: November 20–26
Inquiries: 212 202 0530

Western American & Arms and Armour
Auction: November 30
Viewing: November 26–29
Inquiries: 212 606 0536

DECEMBER AUCTIONS

Important American Indian Art Including Property from the Collections of J.P. Bryan
Auction: December 1
Viewing: November 26–30
Inquiries: 212 606 0536

Memories... The Personal Property of Barbra Streisand
Auction: December 2
Viewing: November 29–December 1
Inquiries: 212 606 0525

20th Century Decorative Arts
Auction: December 8
Viewing: December 4–7
Inquiries: 212 606 0530

Anitque and Fine Jewelry
Auction: December 8
Viewing: December 4–7
Inquiries: 212 606 0475

European and Asian Decorative Arts
Auction: December 14
Viewing: December 10–13
Inquiries: 212 606 0525

Silver
Auction: December 15
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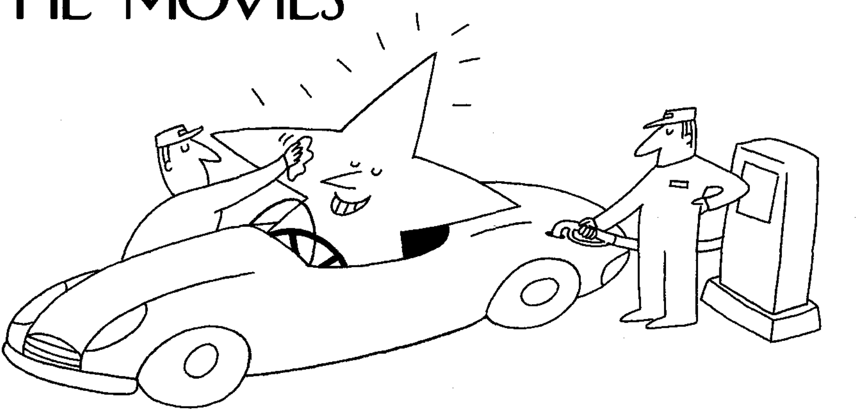

CHARLES BARSOTTI

OPENING

All About My Mother—Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Nov. 19. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Square.)

42 Up—Michael Apted contines to follow the lives—at seven-year intervals—of the people he first worked with in his 1964 documentary, "7 Up." Opening Nov. 17. (Film Forum.)

Home Page—A documentary about the Internet, directed by Doug Block. Opening Nov. 19. (Cinema Village.)

Liberty Heights—Barry Levinson's film about a Jewish family in 1954 Baltimore. With Joe Mantegna and Bebe Neuwirth. Opening Nov. 17.

Lola and Billy the Kid—A coming-of-age story about a sixteen-year-old Turkish boy living in Berlin. Written and directed by Kutlug Ataman. In Turkish and German. Opening Nov. 19. (Quad Cinema.)

Mansfield Park—Jane Austen's story of Fanny Price, a poor relation who comes to live with the Bertrams at Mansfield Park. Directed by Patricia Rozema. Opening Nov. 18. (Angelika Film Center and Paris.)

Sleepy Hollow—Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Nov. 19.

The World Is Not Enough—Pierce Brosnan is again the hero in this new installment in the saga of Agent 007. Directed by Michael Apted. Opening Nov. 19. (Astor Plaza, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Olympia, Orpheum VII, Union Square, and Waverly.)

FILM NOTES

(If a movie has been reviewed recently in The Current Cinema, *the date of its review is given.)*

The African Queen (1951)—An inspired piece of casting brought Humphrey Bogart and Katharine Hepburn together. This is a comedy, a love story, and a tale of adventure, and it is one of the most charming and entertaining movies ever made. The director, John Huston, has written that the comedy was not present either in the novel by C. S. Forester or in the original screenplay by James Agee, John Collier, and himself, but that it grew out of the relationship of Hepburn and Bogart, who were just naturally funny when they worked together. Hepburn has said that the picture wasn't going well until Huston came up with the inspiration that she should think of Rosie as Mrs. Roosevelt. After that, Bogart and Hepburn played together with an ease and humor that makes their love affair—the mating of a forbidding, ironclad spinster and a tough, gin-soaked riverboat captain—seem not only inevitable, but perfect.—*Pauline Kael* (American Museum of the Moving Image; Nov. 20.)

American Beauty—This amazing and impassioned fantasia about American loneliness begins as satire and ends with a vision of the sublime. The defeated suburban patriarch Lester Burnham (Kevin Spacey), condemned by his withdrawn daughter (Thora Birch) and his hyperorganized wife (Annette Bening), drops out of his job and misbehaves badly. After Lester's marriage gets blown apart by squalls of comic contempt, the movie, which was written by Alan Ball and directed by the British theatre maestro Sam Mendes (it's his first film), opens up and takes in Lester's suburban territory—the dissatisfactions of the business-mad nineties, in which the gospel of selfishness leaves people clenched and isolated. The bitter satirical riffs slowly give way to a mystical appreciation of the vagrant beauty trapped beneath the surface of life.—*David Denby* (9/20/99) (BAM Rose Cinemas, Beekman, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatres, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, State, and Village Theatre VII.)

American Movie—Chris Smith's documentary about a young Wisconsin man (Mark Borchardt) and his drug-addled best friend (Mike Schank) in a three-year struggle to make a cheap horror movie is a fascinating, disturbing character study. Borchardt is resourceful, if a little unhinged, and his fast-talking enthusiasm sweeps many of his friends and family up in pursuit of his dream. There are a lot of funny, sometimes uncomfortable glimpses of Borchardt's film-making (at one point, he pounds a friend's head, take after take, into a kitchen cabinet until the cabinet breaks), but the documentary also deals with Borchardt's poor, uneducated background, the collection agencies after him, and the trouble he has supporting his three kids. Smith sometimes ridicules his subject, but mostly he presents the story in a refreshingly heartfelt way. It is Borchardt's dream that keeps those around him alive and relatively sane.—*Bruce Diones* (Film Forum.)

Anywhere But Here—Wayne Wang, the director of "The Joy Luck Club," has made another picture that feels proudly bereft of men. A few of them get walk-on parts as dopes or turncoats, but most of the space is occupied by Adele August (Susan Sarandon) and her teen-age daughter, Ann (Natalie Portman). The two of them leave a settled life in Wisconsin and head for the riskier pleasures of Los Angeles, where the bulk of their relationship is consumed by arguments about their relationship; for a movie about escape, it seems dangerously trapped in its own predicament. If you want the Wang who made "Slamdance" and "Smoke," with their lightness and glee, you'll have to wait for his next film; meanwhile, this one is rescued and redeemed by the presence of Natalie Portman, whose portrait of grave and lovely bafflement may be the best work she's done.—*Anthony Lane* (11/15/99) (Chelsea West, Criterion Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 62nd & Broadway, and Village East Cinemas.)

The Bachelor—Chris O'Donnell produces and stars in this slack retread of Buster Keaton's silent comic romp "Seven Chances." The story, about a man who has to get married within twenty-four hours in order to inherit

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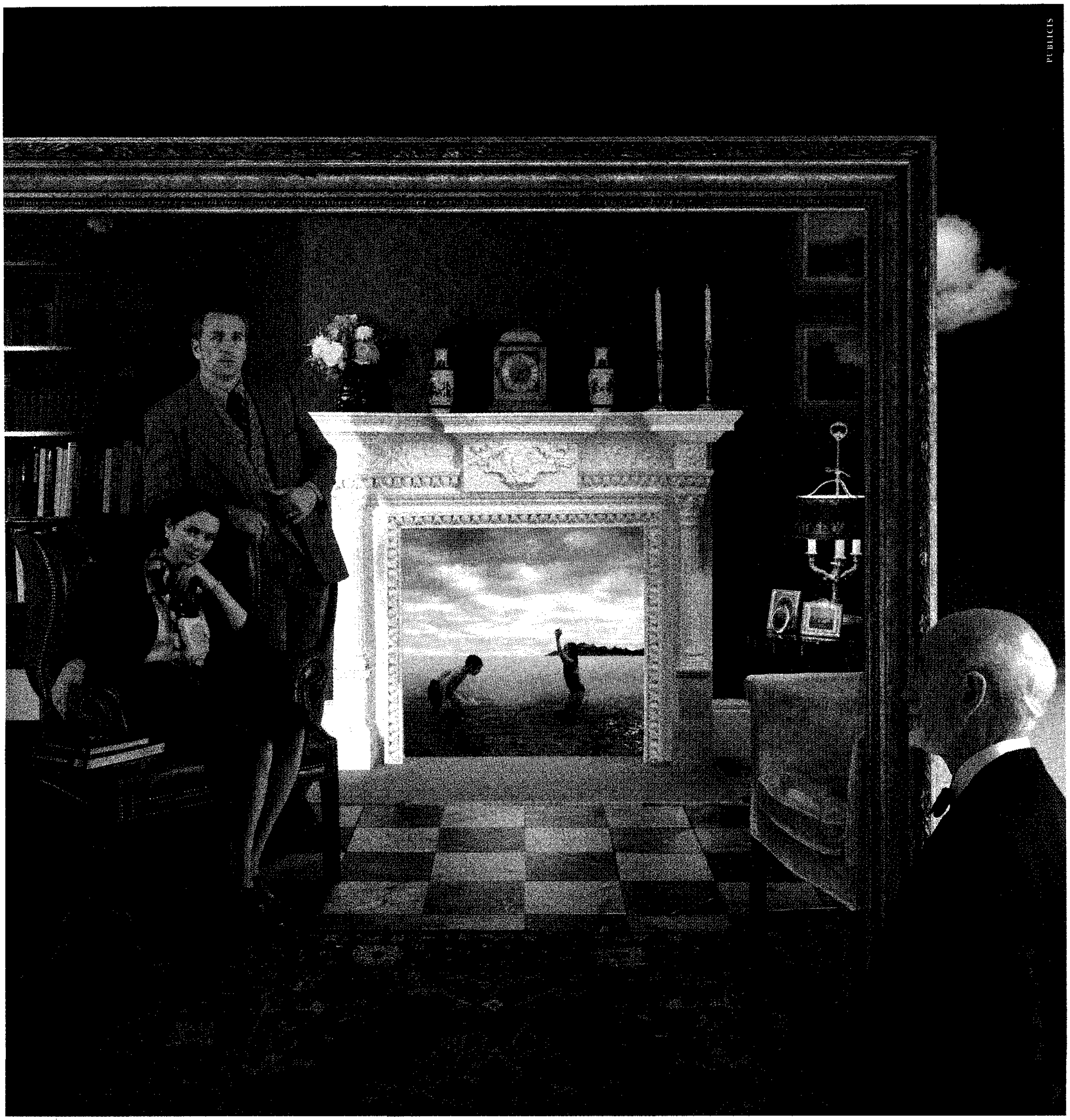

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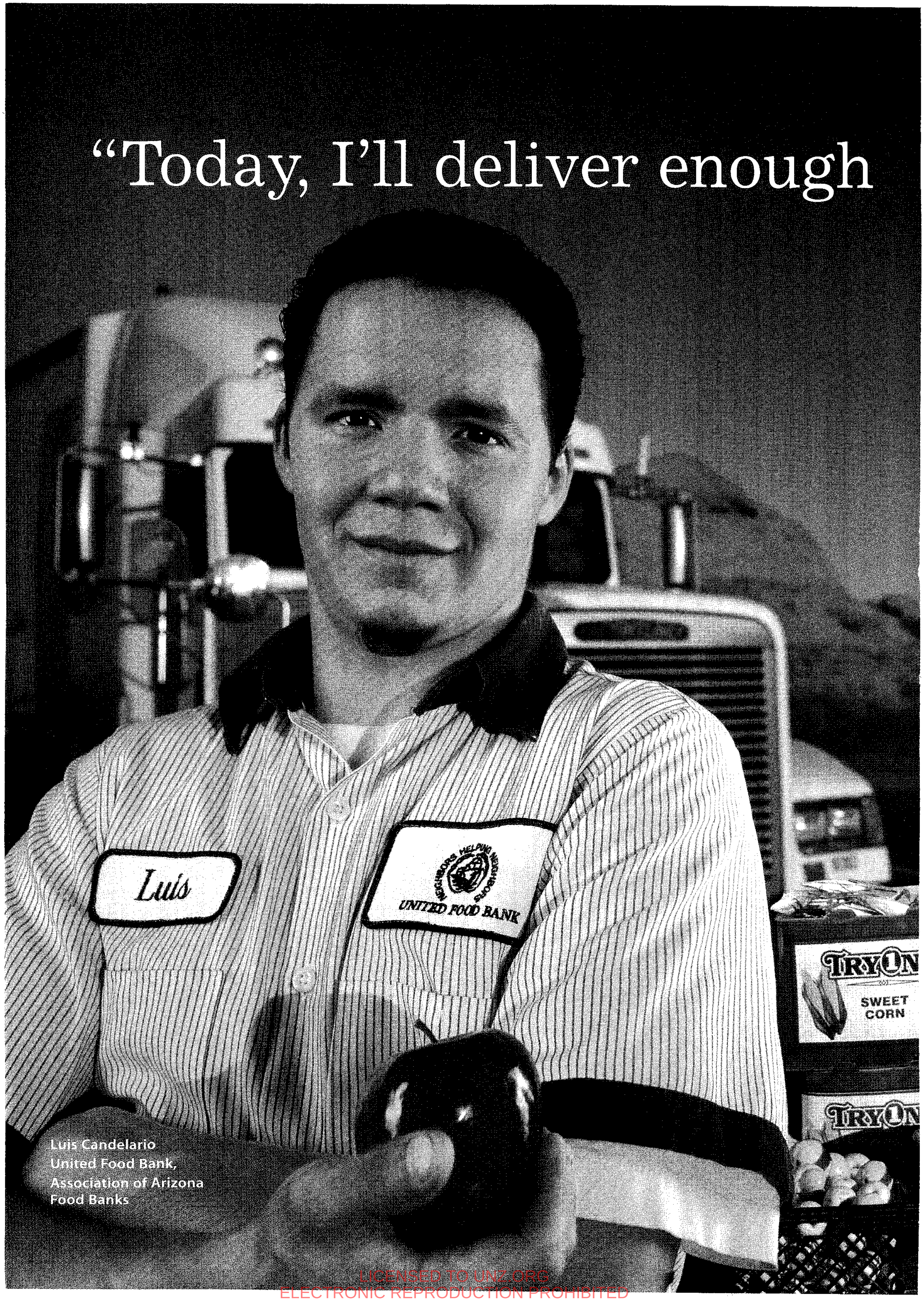
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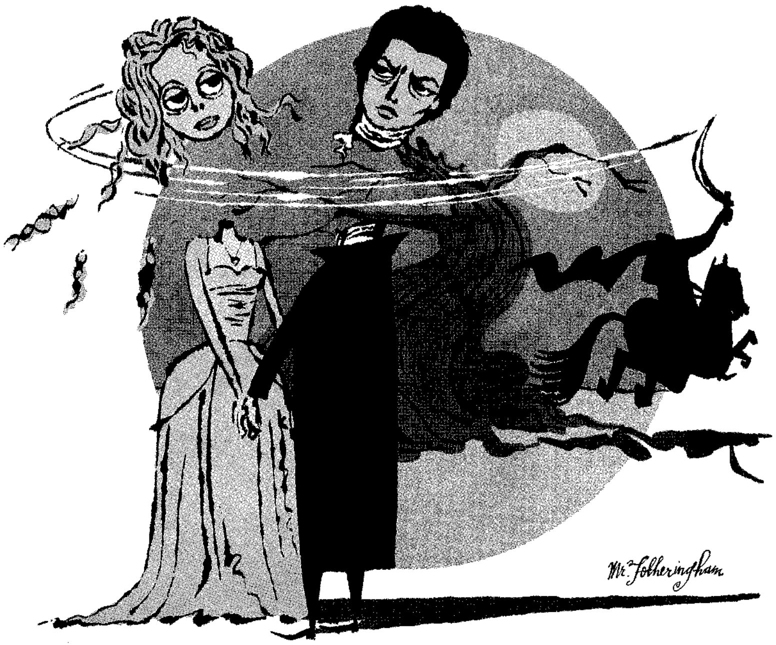
his grandfather's fortune, hasn't been updated much. It's an anachronistic and, at times, culturally clueless undertaking; at one point, the bachelor is seen cavorting in a wild herd of available men, while women in pursuit fling lassos around their necks. The comedy is of the old ball-and-chain variety—there's not a hint of modern, knowing humor. Renée Zellweger co-stars as the long-suffering girlfriend who rejects the bachelor's crass proposal, and Brooke Shields (in full drag-queen mode) appears as a financially strapped socialite.—*B.D.* (Cinema II, Criterion Center, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village East Cinemas.)

Being John Malkovich—Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (BAM Rose Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, and Village Theatre VII.)

The Best Man—A sleek and somewhat sophisticated ensemble comedy by first-time writer-director Malcolm Lee. It's a "My Best Friend's Wedding" type of picture with some "Big Chill" background, and the great-looking cast—Taye Diggs, Nia Long, Morris Chestnut, and Terrence Howard—makes it a finely tuned date movie.—*B.D.* (Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Orpheum VII, and Union Square.)



Opening Nov. 19, Tim Burton's "Sleepy Hollow."

EDWIN FOTHERINGHAM

The Bone Collector—Denzel Washington and Angelina Jolie may have signed on to this picture believing they were going to do a "Rear Window"-type thriller, but the film, while sharply directed by Phillip Noyce, is so badly plotted that it feels like an episode of "Ironside." Washington plays a forensics expert, a quadriplegic confined to his bed, who guides a police rookie (Jolie) through a series of clues to catch a gruesome serial killer. Noyce jacks up the slick production values and cool camera angles to give the picture some pizzazz, but the hokey dialogue and catch-the-killer philosophizing kills most of the tension. Although Washington's charisma shines, Jolie gives such a thin performance that it's almost laughable.—*B.D.* (Coronet Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, 42nd Street E Walk, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, State, and Village Theatre VII.)

Boys Don't Cry—In small-town Nebraska, a young woman named Teena Brandon (Hilary Swank) clips her hair into a butch cut, flattens her breasts, puts on boys' clothes and a boy's swagger, and passes in the world as Brandon Teena, handsome young dude. What she feels is pure exhilaration, the excitement of leaving her past behind and becoming a lover; what we feel is dismay and fear. Brandon falls in with a group of derelict, white-trash kids and attracts the languid beauty Lana (Chloë Sevigny), who allows herself to think that Brandon is a man—with inevitably disastrous results. The movie is a fine, terrifying tragic poem that is also, at times, subversively funny: the women who like Brandon seem to want the feminine as well as the masculine in a lover. Directed by Kimberly Peirce, and written by Peirce and Andy Bienen. Based on actual events, which were the subject last year of a documentary called "The Brandon Teena Story."—*D.D.* (10/18-25/99) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Union Square.)

Bringing Out the Dead—Martin Scorsese teams up with Paul Schrader—his screenwriter on "Taxi Driver" and other pictures—for a return to New York. This time, the means of transport is an ambulance, and the hero is a weary paramedic by the name of Frank Pierce (Nicolas Cage). Frank keeps losing more patients than he saves; indeed, his world has gone into decline before the story even begins, and Cage's dour, dark-eyed resignation sits uneasily with the restive, high-energy look of the film. It's not so much plotted as peopled with recurring figures, both alive and dead: a practicing lunatic, a young asthma sufferer who dies in Frank's arms, and a numb ex-junkie (Patricia Arquette) who just won't leave him alone. Then there are the other paramedics, played by John Goodman, Tom Sizemore, and Ving Rhames. Of these, only Rhames takes the movie by the throat and finds the black farce within it, mocking the somnolence (and the lyrical voice-overs) that prevails elsewhere.—*A.L.* (11/1/99) (Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 72nd Street East, and Village Theatre VII. . . . ¶ Astor Plaza; through Nov. 18.)

Dogma—This is obviously the growth season for indie kids. Just as David O. Russell has graduated from nerdy comedy to "Three Kings," so Kevin Smith, lord of the zero budget ("Clerks," "Chasing Amy"), has decided to stretch himself with this sprawling, star-stuffed fantasy on the trifling theme of good and evil. It even has special effects: fairly cruddy ones, it's true, but there was a time when the most special Kevin Smith effect was two consecutive minutes of audible sound. His unlikely plot features Matt Damon and Ben Affleck, the Abbott and Costello of the next millennium, as a couple of renegade angels who spot a chance to reënter heaven and thus terminate the universe. Up against them is a rank of supernatural forces—played by Alan Rickman, Chris Rock, Jason Lee, and Selma Hayek—a perplexed earthling (Linda Fiorentino), and a couple of unwitting prophets, played by the grungy Jason Mewes and the bearded Smith himself, back by popular demand from his previous pictures. The result has some great lines, but it's a muddle that turns into a mess; there have been cries of distress about the film's attack on organized religion, but no self-respecting church could seriously claim to be damaged by this extended skit. With Alanis Morissette as God.—*A.L.* (11/15/99) (BAM Rose Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, East 85th Street, First & 62nd Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, and Union Square.)

Double Jeopardy—This revenge fantasy isn't believable for an instant, but it provides basic emotional satisfactions. Ashley Judd gets sent to prison for the murder of her embezzling handsome rotter of a husband, Bruce Greenwood. When she realizes he's still alive—he staged the whole thing and set her up—she becomes a single-minded avenger, a woman without fear. Director Bruce Beresford brings some delicate character touches to the material and enough space for the moods to ripen, though you may catch yourself wishing that Hitchcock could take over and provide a little wit. Tommy Lee Jones is the parole officer who falls in love with Judd's courage.—*D.D.* (Art Greenwich Twin, 84th Street Sixplex, 59th Street East Cinema, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and State.)

Five Easy Pieces (1970)—Jack Nicholson plays a drifter named Bobby Dupea, who is holding down a grimy job in an oil field, hanging out in bowling alleys and trailer parks, and squabbling with his childlike, clingy girlfriend, Rayette (Karen Black). We later learn that Bobby is a dropout from a somewhat higher-toned world—the black sheep of a family of classical musicians who live the cultured life on an island retreat in the Pacific Northwest. He's persuaded by his sister (Lois Smith) to return home to see his father (William Challee), who has been paralyzed by a couple of strokes, and the movie, along with its protagonist, tries to make the leap from Tammy Wynette country to someplace in Ingmar Bergman's neighborhood. Directed by Bob Rafelson, the picture—perhaps reflecting its times better than it knows—has an air of complexity, even profundity, but it's really just schizophrenia with a literary shine. Nicholson, who's in every scene, is so good that he almost manages to mask the film's confusions.—*Terrence Rafferty* (Film Forum; Nov. 21. . . . ¶ BAM Rose Cinemas; Nov. 21.)

The Insider—Midnight calls, clandestine meetings, threatening E-mail messages, not to mention cell phones used as obsessively as lances and shields in a jousting epic: the circuits never stop burning in this self-important but juicily entertaining public-affairs melodrama about big-time journalism and corporate villainy. Russell Crowe plays the real-life whistle-blower Jeffrey Wigand, who in 1995 had devastating things to reveal about his former employer, tobacco giant Brown & Williamson, and Al Pacino is the bristling "60 Minutes" producer Lowell Bergman, who wanted to bring Wigand's information to the public. The two men—one stolid, the other self-dramatizing—make an odd but satisfying couple; they are meant to represent two kinds of personal honor arrayed against venal or merely smooth corporate game-players, including Michael Gambon as a tobacco executive and Christopher Plummer as a mildly satirized Mike Wallace. Director

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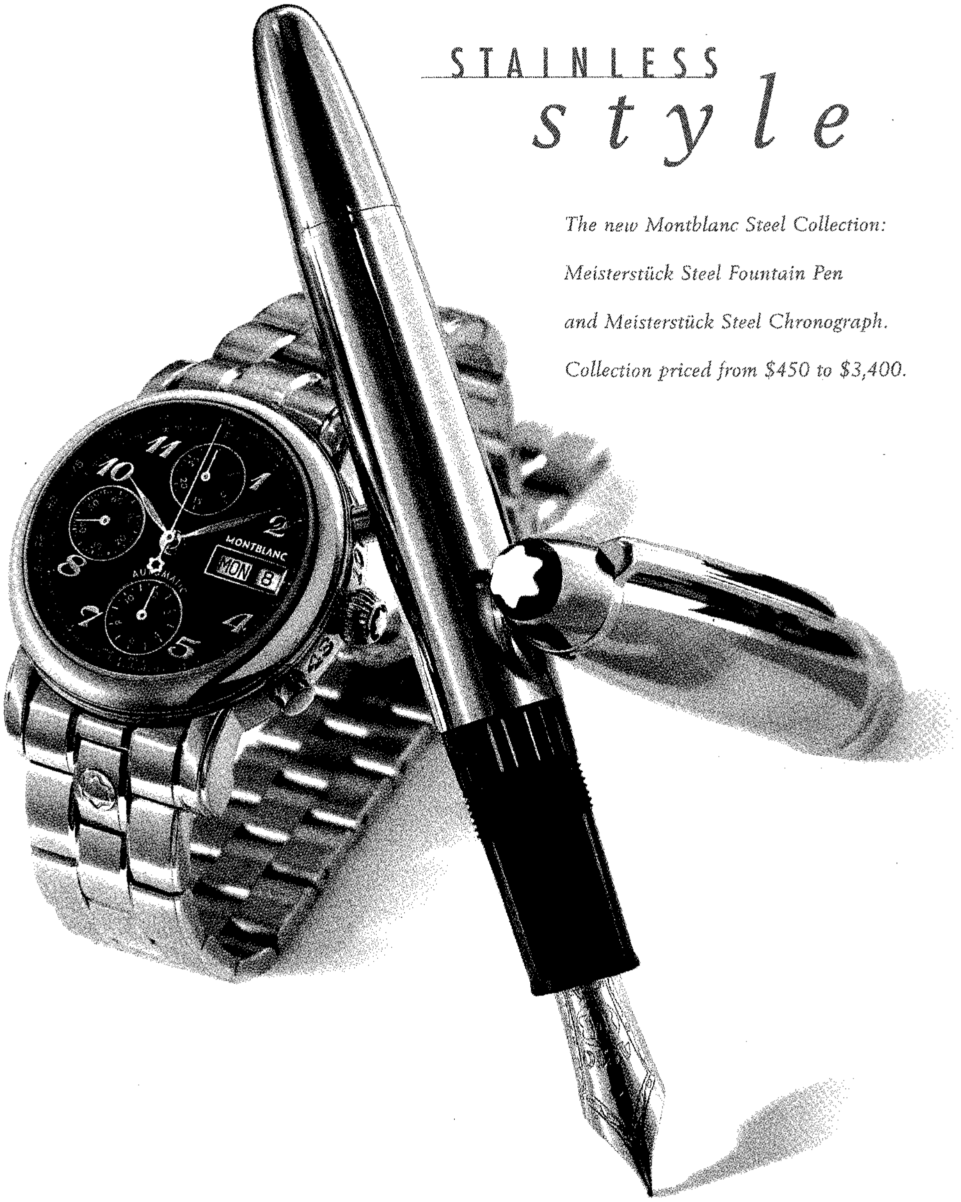

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Michael Mann creates a rising line of tension and paranoia which leads, paradoxically, to a muted, not entirely reassuring ending. Mann and Eric Roth wrote the screenplay, which is based on actual events and on Marie Brenner's reporting in *Vanity Fair*. With Bruce McGill and Diane Venora.—*D.D.* (11/8/99) (Chelsea West, Cinema I, East 86th Street Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Union Square, and Waverly.)

Music of the Heart—It's directed by horror king Wes Craven, but it's every bit as sappy as you suspected it might be. Meryl Streep portrays Roberta Guaspari, the real-life divorced mom who brought a violin program to Central Park East elementary school in East Harlem in 1980. The screenplay makes a couple of passes at presenting the teacher as an actual human being—some insecurity here, a bit of impatience and snappishness there—but mostly Streep is encouraged to create a cinematic saint. The other characters—principal Angela Bassett, boyfriend Aidan Quinn, mother Cloris Leachman, jealous teacher Josh Pais—are similarly painted by numbers. Only the kids show an occasional flicker of naturalness. The plot follows up the necessary crises with grand triumphs, and three standing ovations. Mr. Craven's thirst for overkill is undiminished.—*Ken Marks* (Criterion Center, East 86th Street Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Gotham Cinema, Kips Bay Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

Pixote (1980)—A shockingly lyrical Brazilian film about the life of abandoned children who learn to pick pockets and grab purses and hustle—it's their only way of surviving. Thrown into a reformatory, the ten-year-old Pixote watches as several of the larger boys gang-rape a kid not much older than he is, and his truculent baby face is indifferent, but he's a little camera taking it all in. A group of boys, including Pixote, break out, and he and three others snatch enough purses and wallets to make their way to Rio de Janeiro and begin dealing cocaine. Outsmarted by the adult criminals, the kids buy an aging, drunken prostitute from a pimp and go into business with her: she brings men home, and they rob them at gunpoint. As the director, Hector Babenco (who appears in a prologue), sees it, Pixote is a snub-nosed infant asserting his wants, and when they're denied he changes into a baby gangster—a runt Scarface, who kills innocently, in the sense that he doesn't understand the enormity of the crime. The thesis is too pat, but two of the characters—Lilica (Jorge Julião), a flamingly nelly seventeen-year-old transvestite homosexual, and the whore Sueli, the whoriest whore imaginable (Marília Pêra)—transcend it. In Portuguese.—*P.K.* (BAM Rose Cinemas; Nov. 17.)

Princess Mononoke—This handsome, beautifully designed Japanese animated film has the size—though not the clarity—of a great Japanese film epic. The enormous landscapes and the variety of human and animal figures are gratifying, but the plot is more complicated than that of "The Ring of the Niebelungen." It's impossible, at times, to tell who's fighting on whose side, and why, so it's best not to try to make sense of everything but instead relax and enjoy the fantastic forest demons, the enormous wolves, the mix of slashing swords and arrows, and the enveloping, gelatinous forest-demon gunk. The movie may be semi-incoherent, but it's still gripping. Minnie Driver, Billy Crudup, Billy Bob Thornton, Gillian Anderson, and Claire Danes provide the voices. Hayao Miyazaki is the director.—*D.D.* (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Square.)

Rosetta—The camera crowds in behind Rosetta (Emilie Dequenne), a girl maybe seventeen or eighteen, as she goes about her furious, mole-like economic activity, selling mended clothes, fishing in a miserable swamp, running back and forth between the trailer camp in which she lives and the waffle stands of a rain-soaked Belgian city. This dour but stirring masterpiece of moral inquiry (it won the Palme d'Or at Cannes last summer) was written and directed by the Belgians Luc and Jean-Pierre Dardenne, who appear, at first, to be Marxists without a program. Their appalling, unsmiling heroine, they seem to say, is the kind of pleasureless, other-annihilating person produced by the capitalist system. Yet they make Rosetta a person, not an economic integer, and their realization of her life is an outstanding imaginative feat. We await, with excited curiosity, those stirrings of Rosetta's consciousness which might suggest that she has emerged from the mud of her life for a breath of fresh air. In French.—*D.D.* (11/8/99) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema.)

The Straight Story—By way of a comic coda to the violent "Lost Highway," David Lynch has confounded all expectations and come up with a movie about a lawnmower. The model in question, a gas-guzzling 1966 John Deere, is ridden by the elderly Alvin Straight (who was a real person, but it's a perfect Lynch name) all the way from Laurens, Iowa, to Mt. Zion, Wisconsin, on a mission of mercy to his brother, Lyle. The result is a perplexing blend of the ornery and the ornate; Richard Farnsworth plays Alvin as a stubbornly decent sort, while Lynch riddles his journey with bursts of calculated strangeness—including a house ablaze by the side of the road, attended by firemen who might have stepped out of "Blue Velvet."—*A.L.* (11/1/99) (American Museum of the Moving Image, Angelika Film Center, Cinema 3rd Avenue, and Lincoln Square.)

The Thin Blue Line (1988)—Errol Morris's trancelike, almost lyrical documentary tells the story of a 1976 cop-killing in Dallas and examines the process by which a man who is almost certainly innocent was convicted and sentenced to death for the crime. The movie's form is circular, spiralling, and its obsessive, repetitive visual motifs are echoed in Philip Glass's hauntingly monotonous score. There are interviews with the principals, closeups of key words and paragraphs from newspaper accounts, courtroom sketches, maps, family-album snapshots, diagrams, and a series of eerie reënactments of witnesses' different versions of the murder and the events that led up to it. This is documentary as epistemological thriller: Morris wants to bring us to the point at which our apprehension of the real world reaches the pitch of paranoia.—*T.R.* (Museum of Modern Art; Nov. 20.)

Twentieth Century (1934)—A first-rate hard-boiled farce about theatrical personalities. John Barrymore was a great farceur, and his performance as the egomaniac producer Oscar Jaffe is a roaring caricature of theatrical drive and temperament. It was Carole Lombard's performance as Jaffe's protégée, Lily Garland (née Mildred Plotka), who has become a movie star, that established her as a comedienne. Howard Hawks directed in a fast, entertaining style, punching up the lines; it's the style he later perfected in "His Girl Friday."—*P.K.* (Film Forum; Nov. 22.)

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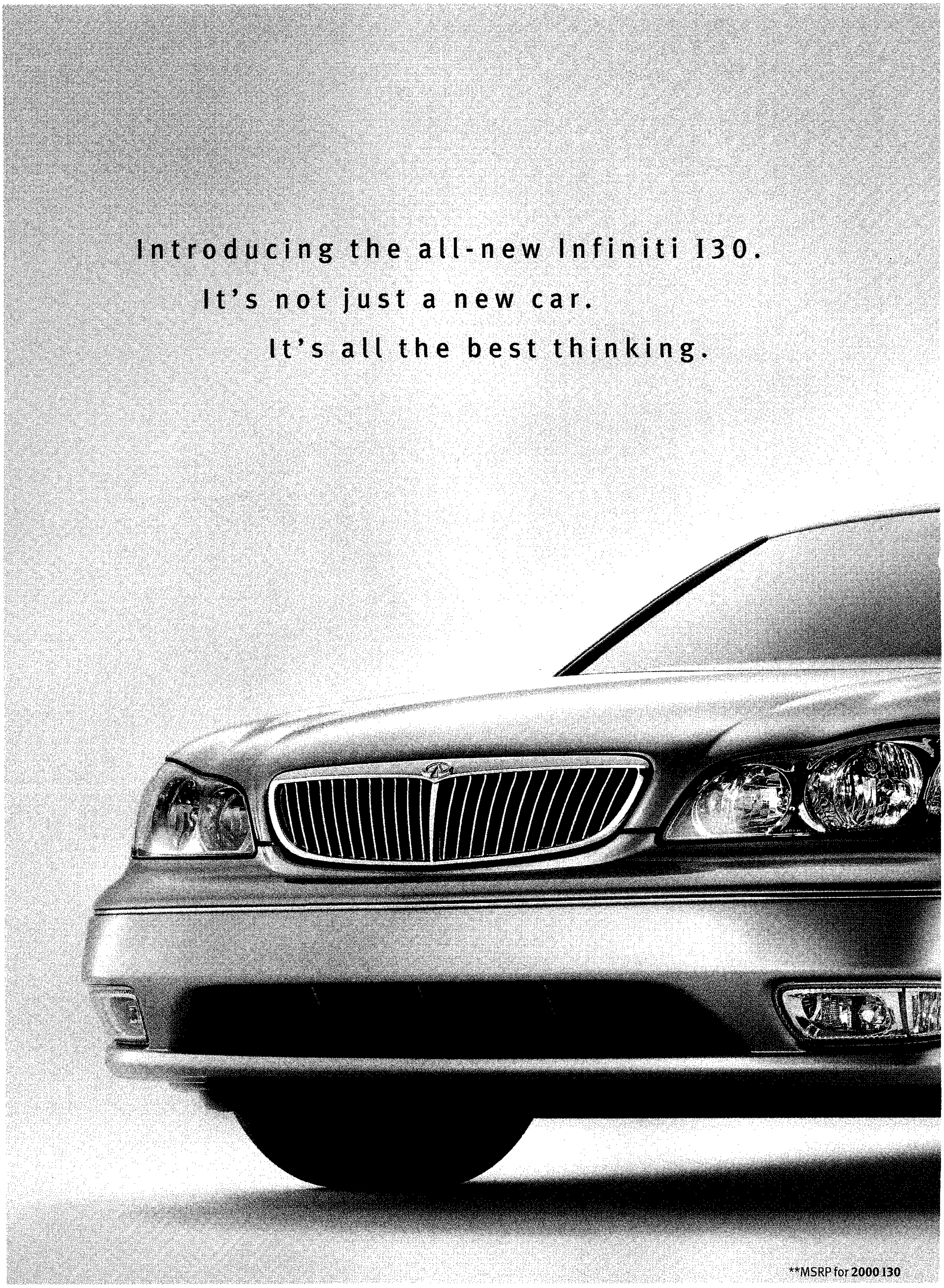
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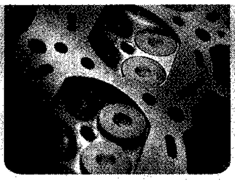
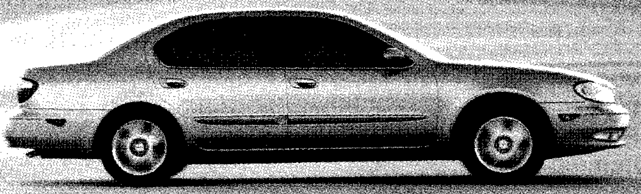


If you were designing a new luxury car, how would you make it stand apart from the crowd? Would you give it the most powerful V6 engine in its class? Would you create the most spacious cabin in its class?* Maybe you'd offer luxury touches and a level of ingenuity that you couldn't find anywhere else. Surely, laying claim to any one of these achievements would set you apart from today's crowd of luxury automobiles. Imagine how special you'd be if you could claim all of them. Introducing the all-new Infiniti® I30.® It's not just a new luxury sedan. It's all the best thinking in a $30,000** luxury sedan.

Starting at $29,465.**

touring model shown is $31,540 and 2000 I30 luxury model is $29,465, **excluding $525 destination charge,** taxes, title, license and options. Retailer sets actual price.



17" ALUMINUM-ALLOY WHEELS

The I30t's new 5-spoke, 17" aluminum-alloy wheels and low-profile, V-rated tires combine to reduce unsprung weight and improve tire contact, enhancing grip control and driving pleasure.

POWER REAR SUNSHADE

The touch of a button electronically raises a new power rear sunshade, keeping direct sunlight off the rear-seat passengers and lowering overall cabin temperature for greater comfort.

ELECTROFLUORESCENT INSTRUMENTATION

Extensive studies of the human eye helped our engineers develop the I30's new Electrofluorescent Instrumentation, whose soft glow makes the gauges easy to read both in bright daylight and at night.

227-HORSEPOWER V6 ENGINE

The engine called "the best V6 in America"† has gotten even better. Thanks in part to friction-reducing molybdenum coatings and microfinishing, the I30's new 227-hp V6 is now the most powerful in its class.

TRACTION CONTROL SYSTEM

The new I30's available Traction Control System uses advanced microprocessors to detect wheelspin, then delivers optimum power to the drive wheels for improved tire grip and stability.

XENON HEADLIGHTS

The new I30t's High-Intensity Discharge Xenon headlights are twice as bright as traditional halogen headlights and illuminate an astonishing 70% more area for greater visibility and enhanced safety.

ACTIVE HEAD RESTRAINTS

Front and side supplemental air bags and front seat belt pretensioners are joined by new front-seat Active Head Restraints that are designed to help reduce whiplash injuries in certain rear-end collisions.

200-WATT BOSE MUSIC SYSTEM

The 7-speaker Bose® system with CD uses a new Nd woofer whose neodymium iron boron magnet has ten times the magnetic energy of conventional speakers, for richer sound and no audible distortion.

THE TOTAL OWNERSHIP EXPERIENCE

I30 drivers enjoy exclusive benefits, like complimentary Service Loan Cars and car washes with all scheduled maintenance, 24-hour Roadside Assistance and membership in the Infiniti Owner's Club.††

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I30

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REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—Through Nov. 18: "Macbeth" (1971, Roman Polanski). . . . ¶ A program of seventy-five films celebrating Columbia Pictures' seventy-fifth anniversary. Nov. 19-20: "The Lady from Shanghai" (1948, Orson Welles) and "Gilda" (1946, Charles Vidor). . . . Nov. 21: "Five Easy Pieces" (†) and "The Last Detail" (1974, Hal Ashby). . . . Nov. 22: "His Girl Friday" (1940, Howard Hawks) and "Twentieth Century" (†). . . . Nov. 23: "Crime and Punishment" (1935, Josef von Sternberg) and "Reign of Terror" (1949, Anthony Mann).

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—A program of silent films, 1893 to 1928, from the museum's collection. Nov. 18 at 2 and Nov. 20 at 5: "Souls on the Road" (1921, Minoru Murata; with Japanese intertitles). . . . Nov. 20 at 2: "Hail the Woman" (1921, John Griffith Wray). . . . Nov. 21 at 1: "Cameo Kirby" (1923, John Ford). . . . Nov. 21 at 3: "The Toll Gate" (1920, Lambert Hillyer). . . . Nov. 21 at 5 and Nov. 23 at 3: "Assunta Spina" (1915, Gustavo Serena; Italian and English intertitles). . . . ¶ Nov. 18 at 2:30: "Paths in the Night" (1999, Andreas Kleinert; in German). . . . ¶ A program of films directed by Errol Morris. Nov. 18 at 6: "Mr. Death: The Rise and Fall of Fred A. Leuchter, Jr." (1999). . . . Nov. 19 at 2:30 and Nov. 22 at 6: "Gates of Heaven" (1978). . . . Nov. 20 at 2 and Nov. 22 at 2:30: "Vernon, Florida" (1981). . . . Nov. 20 at 5: "The Thin Blue Line" (†). . . . Nov. 21 at 2 and Nov. 23 at 6: "A Brief History of Time" (1992). . . . Nov. 21 at 5: "Fast, Cheap & Out of Control" (1997). . . . Nov. 23 at 3: Short films by Morris.

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center (875-5600)—Through Nov. 25: "The Silence" (1988) and "A Moment of Innocence" (1996), two films by Mohsen Makhmalbaf; in Farsi, with English subtitles. . . . ¶ Nov. 18 at 6:30: "Americanos: Latin Life in the United States" (1999, Susan Todd and Andrew Young). . . . ¶ Nov. 20-21 at 2: "You Are Out of Your Mind, Madicken" (1979, Göran Graffman).

BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-623-2770)—Nov. 17: "Pixote" (†). . . . Nov. 18: "Who Killed Pixote?" (1996, José Jossily; in Portuguese). . . . Nov. 19-20: "Arizona Dream" (1993, Emir Kusturica). . . . Nov. 21: "Five Easy Pieces" (†). . . . Nov. 22: "American Madness" (1932, Frank Capra). . . . Nov. 23: "Fellini's Satyricon" (1969, Federico Fellini; in Italian).

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—A program of films featuring Katharine Hepburn. Nov. 20 at 2: "The African Queen" (†). . . . Nov. 20 at 4:30: "Summertime" (1955, David Lean). . . . Nov. 21 at 1: "Long Day's Journey Into Night" (1962, Sidney Lumet). . . . Nov. 21 at 4:30: "The Glass Menagerie" (1973, Anthony Harvey).

A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St. (989-4850)—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). On Nov. 21 at 7, the feature will be "The Caretakers" (1963, Hal Bartlett).

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Nov. 23 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: "Love Affairs Usually End Badly" (1993, Anne Fontaine; in French).

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St. (685-0008)—Nov. 19 at 6:30: "The Searchers" (1956, John Ford). . . . Nov. 20 at noon: "Ragtime" (1981, Milos Forman). . . . Nov. 20 at 3: "The Best Years of Our Lives" (1946, William Wyler). . . . Nov. 21 at 3: "The Godfather" (1971, Francis Ford Coppola).

Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5110)—Nov. 19 at 7, Nov. 20-21 at 3 and 7, and Nov. 22-23 at 7: "Secret Defense" (1998, Jacques Rivette; in French).

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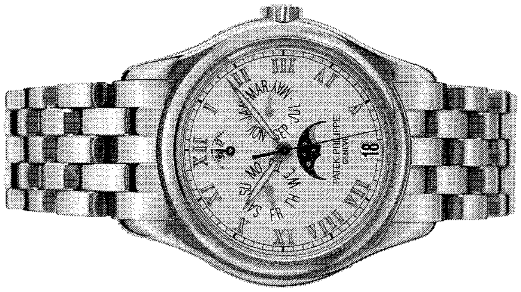
GENEVE



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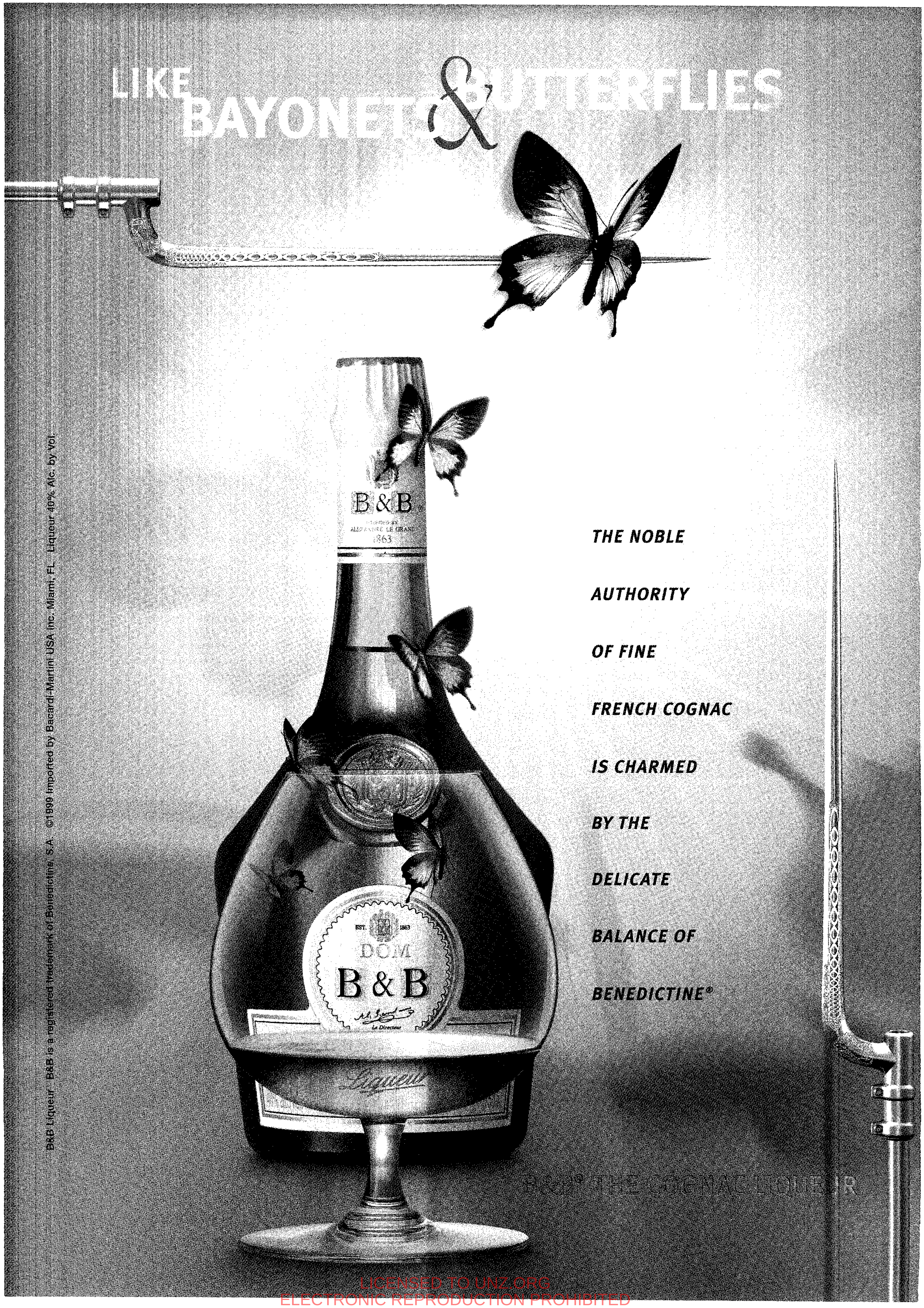
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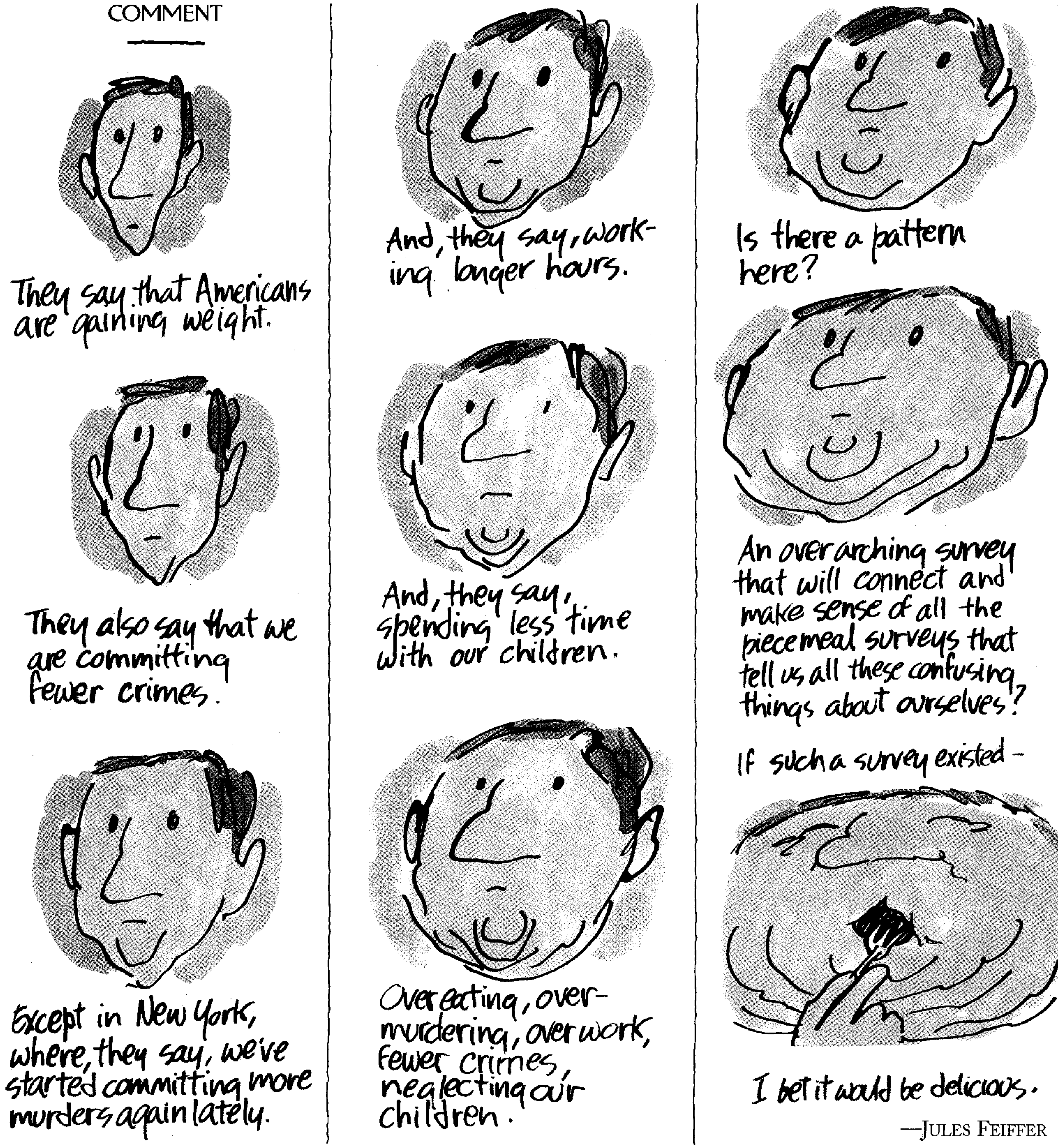
THE NEW YORKER

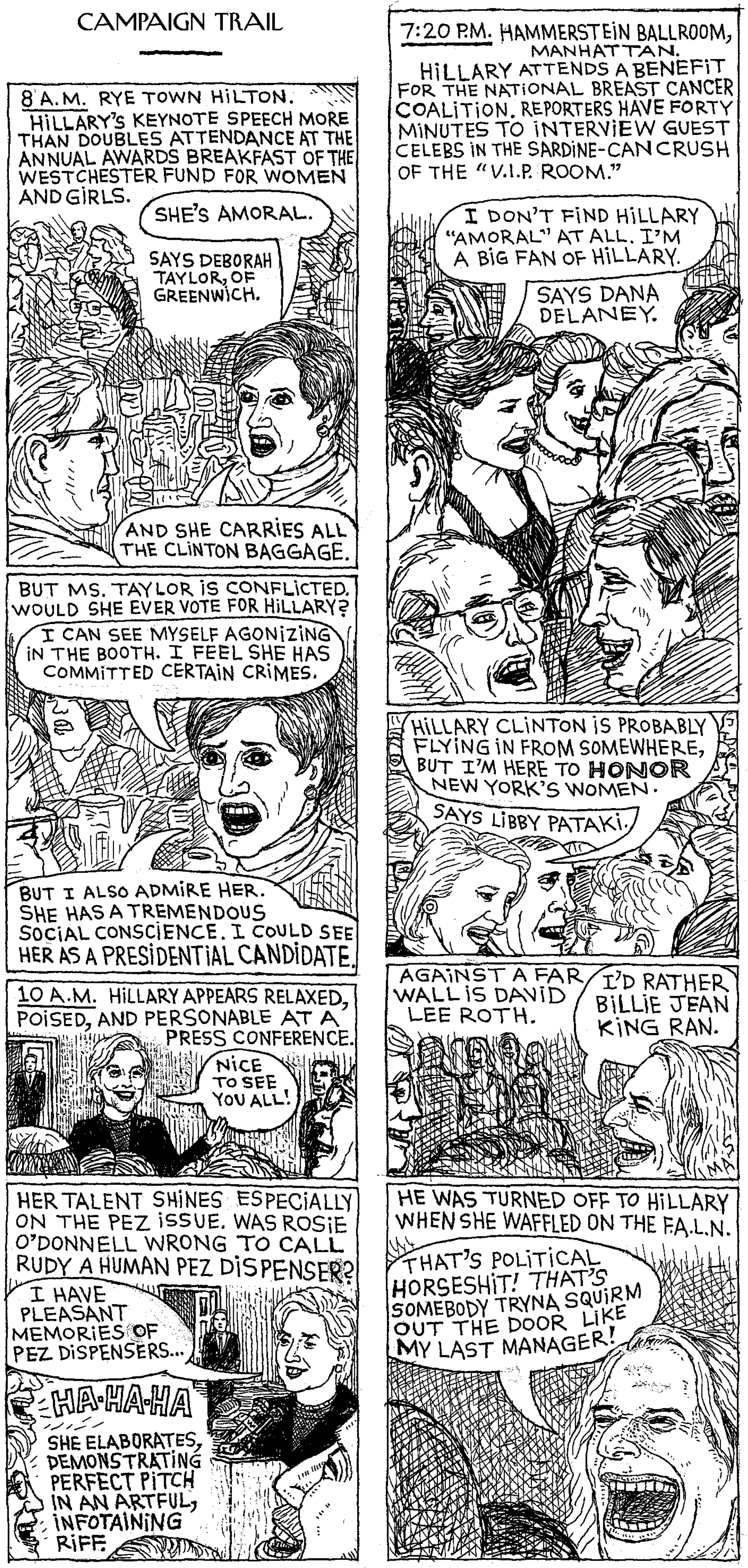
THE TALK OF THE TOWN

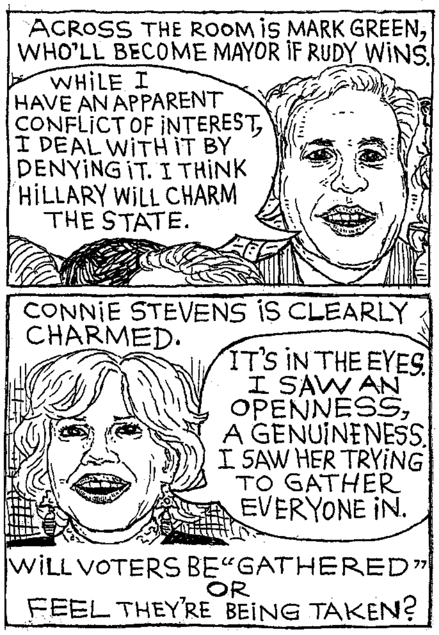
COMMENT


They say that Americans are gaining weight.
They also say that we are committing fewer crimes.
Except in New York, where, they say, we've started committing more murders again lately.
And, they say, working longer hours.
And, they say, spending less time with our children.
Overeating, overmurdering, overwork, fewer crimes, neglecting our children.
Is there a pattern here?
An overarching survey that will connect and make sense of all the piecemeal surveys that tell us all these confusing things about ourselves?
If such a survey existed—
I bet it would be delicious.

—JULES FEIFFER

CAMPAIGN TRAIL

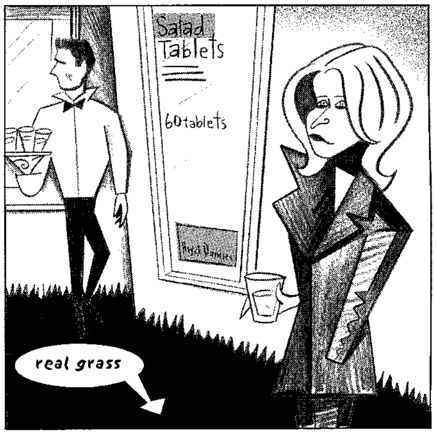

8 A.M. RYE TOWN HILTON.
HILLARY'S KEYNOTE SPEECH MORE THAN DOUBLES ATTENDANCE AT THE ANNUAL AWARDS BREAKFAST OF THE WESTCHESTER FUND FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS.
SHE'S AMORAL.
SAYS DEBORAH TAYLOR, OF GREENWICH.
AND SHE CARRIES ALL THE CLINTON BAGGAGE.
BUT MS. TAYLOR IS CONFLICTED. WOULD SHE EVER VOTE FOR HILLARY?
I CAN SEE MYSELF AGONIZING IN THE BOOTH. I FEEL SHE HAS COMMITTED CERTAIN CRIMES.
BUT I ALSO ADMIRE HER. SHE HAS A TREMENDOUS SOCIAL CONSCIENCE. I COULD SEE HER AS A PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE.
10 A.M. HILLARY APPEARS RELAXED, POISED, AND PERSONABLE AT A PRESS CONFERENCE.
NICE TO SEE YOU ALL!
HER TALENT SHINES ESPECIALLY ON THE PEZ ISSUE. WAS ROSIE O'DONNELL WRONG TO CALL RUDY A HUMAN PEZ DISPENSER?
I HAVE PLEASANT MEMORIES OF PEZ DISPENSERS...
HA-HA-HA
SHE ELABORATES, DEMONSTRATING PERFECT PITCH IN AN ARTFUL, INFOTAINING RIFF.
7:20 P.M. HAMMERSTEIN BALLROOM, MANHATTAN.
HILLARY ATTENDS A BENEFIT FOR THE NATIONAL BREAST CANCER COALITION. REPORTERS HAVE FORTY MINUTES TO INTERVIEW GUEST CELEBS IN THE SARDINE-CAN CRUSH OF THE "V.I.P. ROOM."
I DON'T FIND HILLARY "AMORAL" AT ALL. I'M A BIG FAN OF HILLARY.
SAYS DANA DELANEY.
HILLARY CLINTON IS PROBABLY FLYING IN FROM SOMEWHERE, BUT I'M HERE TO HONOR NEW YORK'S WOMEN.
SAYS LIBBY PATAKI.
AGAINST A FAR WALL IS DAVID LEE ROTH.
I'D RATHER BILLIE JEAN KING RAN.
HE WAS TURNED OFF TO HILLARY WHEN SHE WAFFLED ON THE F.A.L.N.
THAT'S POLITICAL HORSESHIT! THAT'S SOMEBODY TRYNA SQUIRM OUT THE DOOR LIKE MY LAST MANAGER!

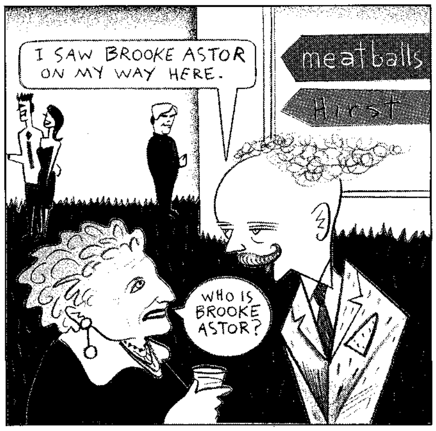

ACROSS THE ROOM IS MARK GREEN, WHO'LL BECOME MAYOR IF RUDY WINS.
WHILE I HAVE AN APPARENT CONFLICT OF INTEREST, I DEAL WITH IT BY DENYING IT. I THINK HILLARY WILL CHARM THE STATE.
CONNIE STEVENS IS CLEARLY CHARMED.
IT'S IN THE EYES. I SAW AN OPENNESS, A GENUINENESS. I SAW HER TRYING TO GATHER EVERYONE IN.
WILL VOTERS BE "GATHERED" OR FEEL THEY'RE BEING TAKEN?

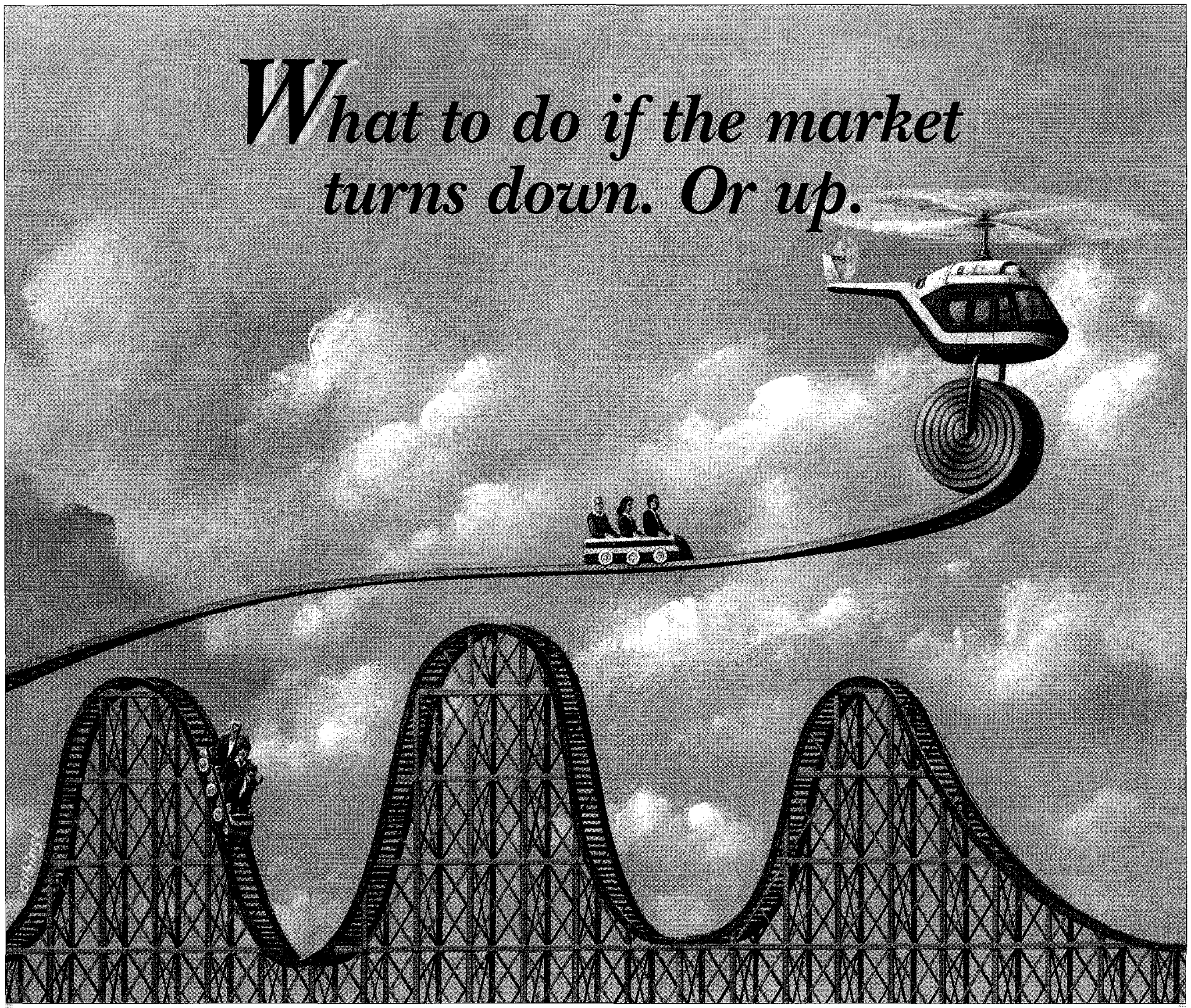
—Mark Alan Stamaty

AT THE GALLERIES

The other night, the "Sensation" artist Damien Hirst unveiled "The Last Supper," thirteen pharmaceutical-theme works, at Magidson Fine Art. Guests signed a "Freedom Speech Journal," which will be sent to the Mayor.


Salad Tablets
60 tablets
real grass


I SAW BROOKE ASTOR ON MY WAY HERE.
meatballs
Hirst
WHO IS BROOKE ASTOR?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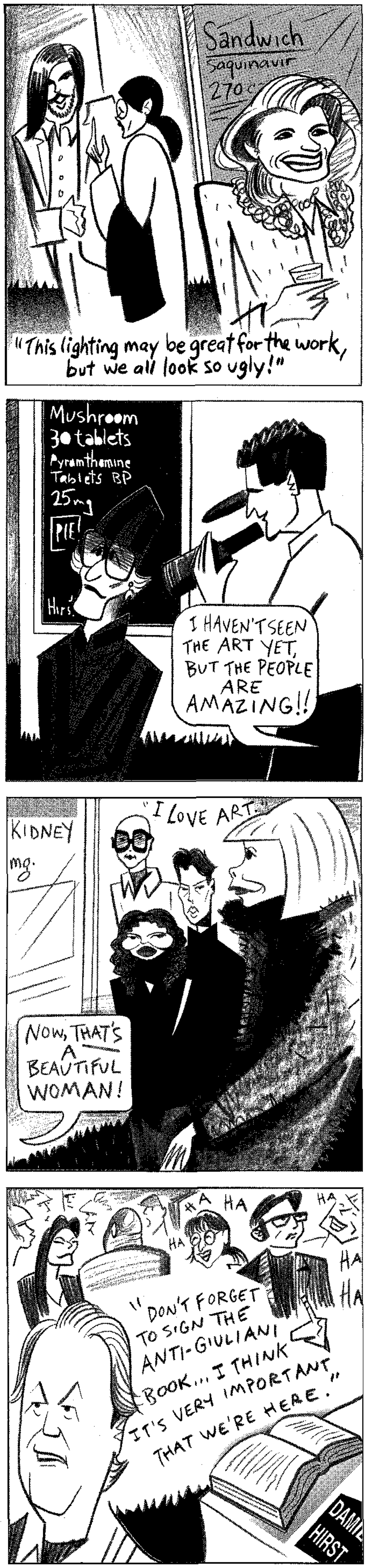
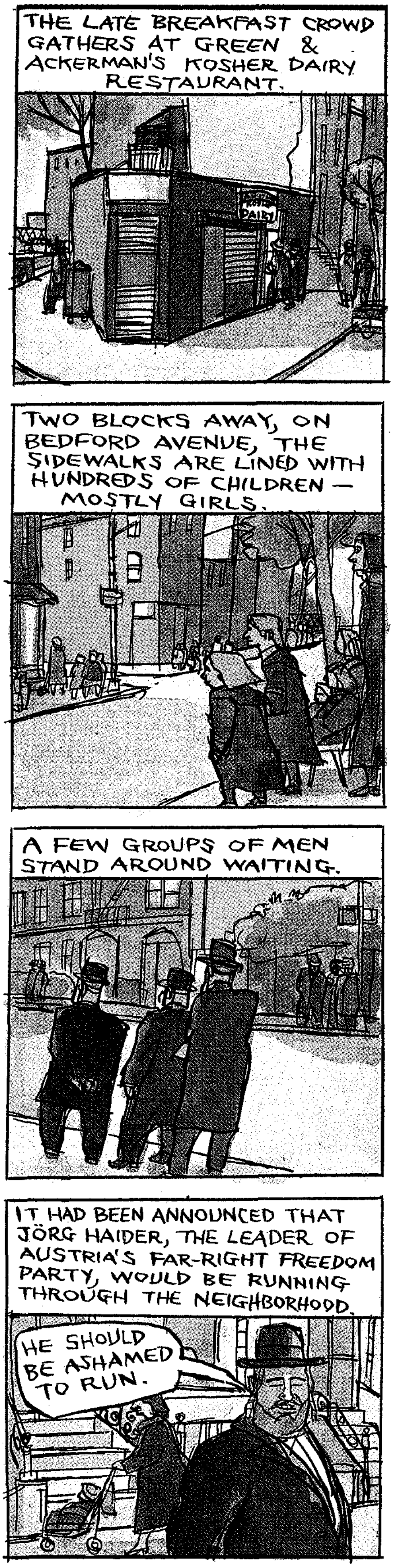
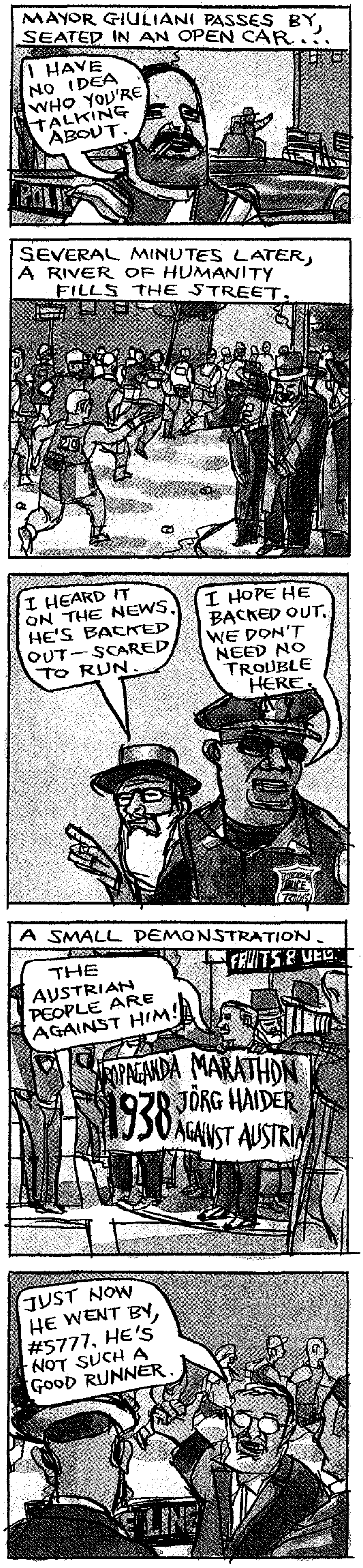

Sandwich
Saquinavir
270c
"This lighting may be great for the work, but we all look so ugly!"
Mushroom
30 tablets
Pyramthamine
Tablets BP
25mg
PIE!
Hirs
I HAVEN'T SEEN THE ART YET, BUT THE PEOPLE ARE AMAZING!!
KIDNEY
mg.
"I LOVE ART."
NOW, THAT'S A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN!
HA HA
HA
HA
HA
HA
"DON'T FORGET TO SIGN THE ANTI-GIULIANI BOOK... I THINK IT'S VERY IMPORTANT THAT WE'RE HERE."
DAMIEN HIRST

—ROBERT RISKO

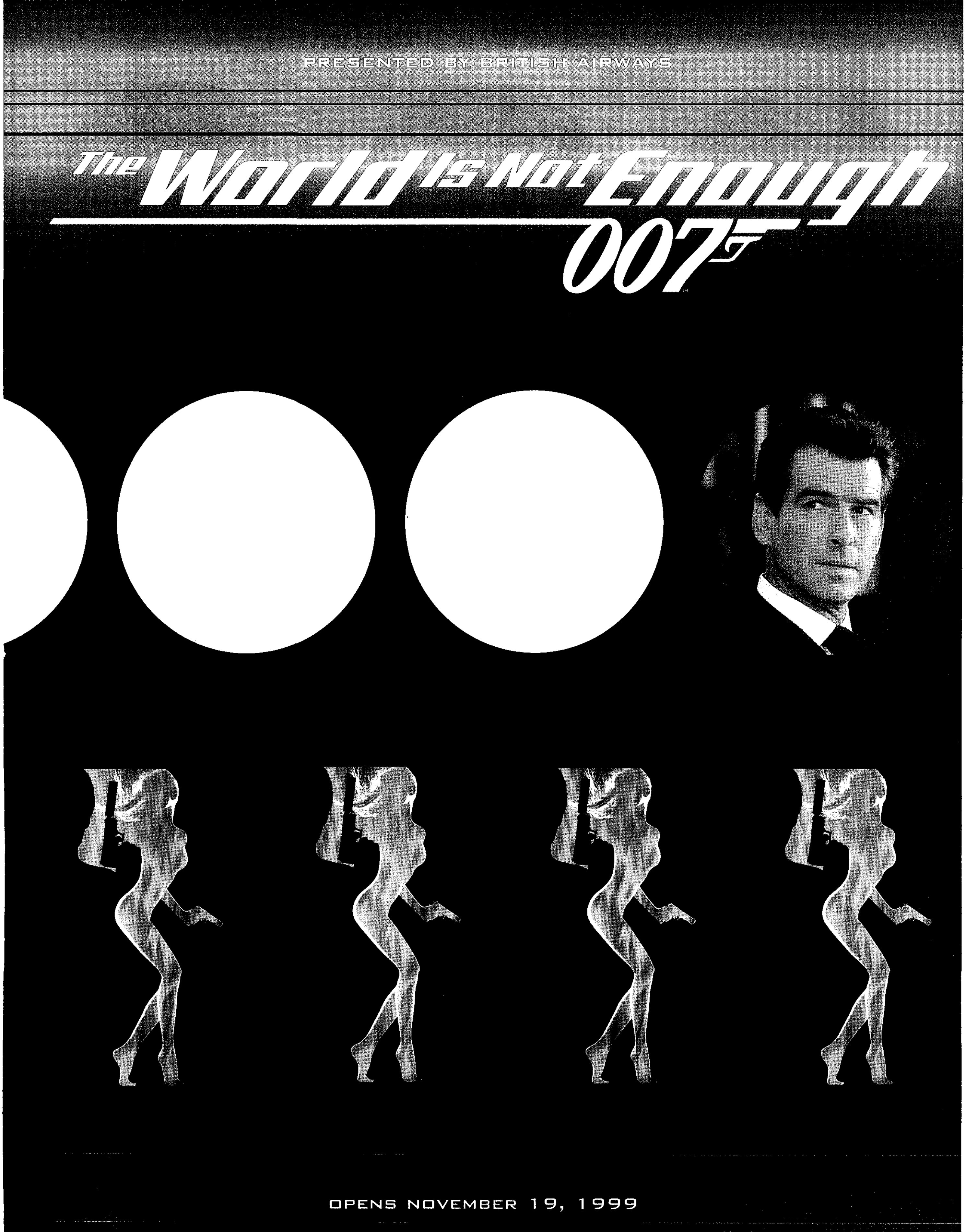
DEPT. OF HARMONY

The New York City Marathon passes through Brooklyn's Williamsburg.


THE LATE BREAKFAST CROWD GATHERS AT GREEN & ACKERMAN'S KOSHER DAIRY RESTAURANT.
KOSHER DAIRY
TWO BLOCKS AWAY, ON BEDFORD AVENUE, THE SIDEWALKS ARE LINED WITH HUNDREDS OF CHILDREN — MOSTLY GIRLS.
A FEW GROUPS OF MEN STAND AROUND WAITING.
IT HAD BEEN ANNOUNCED THAT JÖRG HAIDER, THE LEADER OF AUSTRIA'S FAR-RIGHT FREEDOM PARTY, WOULD BE RUNNING THROUGH THE NEIGHBORHOOD.
HE SHOULD BE ASHAMED TO RUN.


MAYOR GIULIANI PASSES BY, SEATED IN AN OPEN CAR...
I HAVE NO IDEA WHO YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.
POLICE
SEVERAL MINUTES LATER, A RIVER OF HUMANITY FILLS THE STREET.
I HEARD IT ON THE NEWS. HE'S BACKED OUT—SCARED TO RUN.
I HOPE HE BACKED OUT. WE DON'T NEED NO TROUBLE HERE.
A SMALL DEMONSTRATION.
FRUITS & VEG
THE AUSTRIAN PEOPLE ARE AGAINST HIM!
PROPAGANDA MARATHON 1938 JÖRG HAIDER AGAINST AUSTRIA
JUST NOW HE WENT BY, #5777. HE'S NOT SUCH A GOOD RUNNER.
LINE

SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION


PRESENTED BY BRITISH AIRWAYS
The World Is Not Enough
007
OPENS NOVEMBER 19, 1999

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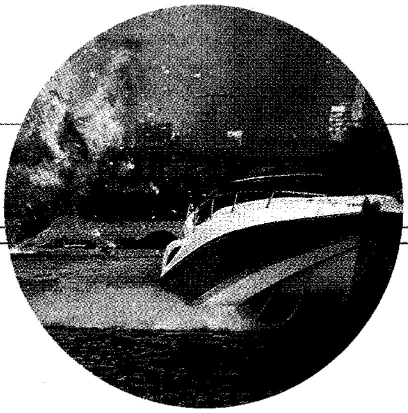

PIERCE BROSNAN IS BACK AS BOND

The mission: to protect the beautiful Elektra King (Sophie Marceau), daughter of an assassinated oil tycoon. Trailing her from the highlands of Scotland, to old Russia, the Caucasus Mountains, and Istanbul, Bond—as only Bond can do—must successfully carry out his duty while diffusing an international power struggle and protecting the globe's oil reserves.

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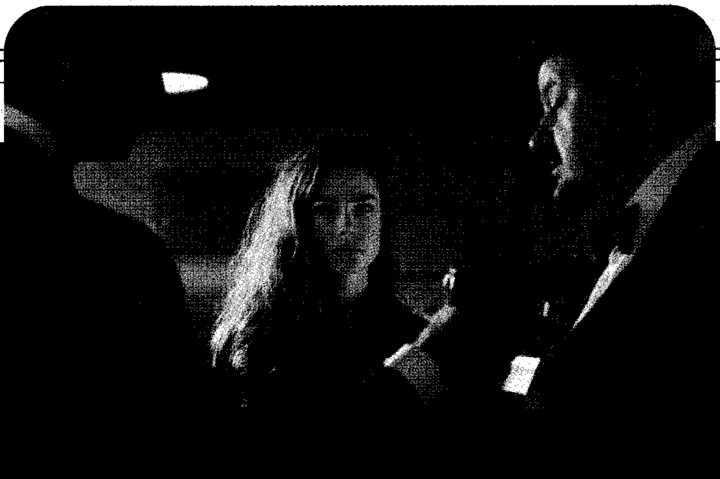
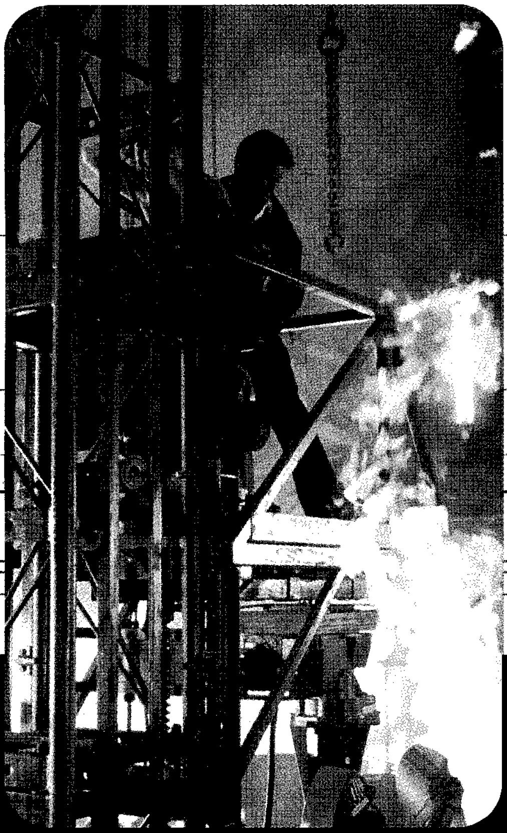
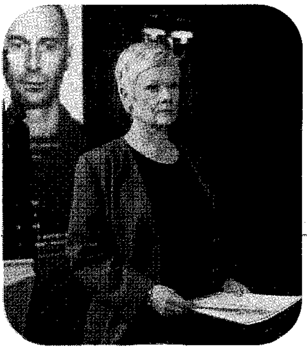


It's all in a day's work for 007. Greed, revenge, high-tech terrorism, and an evil plot to control the future of the Western World. The world's most elegant agent is an expert at outwitting even the most dangerous foe. But in the villain Renard (Robert Carlyle), James Bond may have finally met his match.

Complete with high-speed chases and dazzling locations, *The World Is Not Enough* is the sexiest, most sophisticated, and action-packed Bond film yet.



FLY ACROSS THE ATLANTIC IN LESS THAN THREE AND A HALF HOURS ABOARD CONCORDE AND YOU'LL BE STIRRED, NOT SHAKEN.



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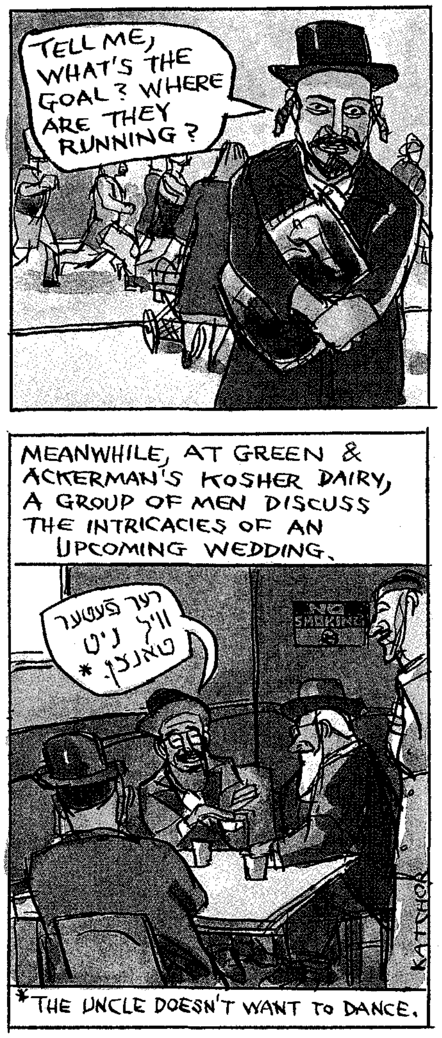

TELL ME, WHAT'S THE GOAL? WHERE ARE THEY RUNNING?
MEANWHILE, AT GREEN & ACKERMAN'S KOSHER DAIRY, A GROUP OF MEN DISCUSS THE INTRICACIES OF AN UPCOMING WEDDING.
NO SMOKING
דער פֿעטער וויל ניט טאַנצן *
KATCHOR
*THE UNCLE DOESN'T WANT TO DANCE.

—BEN KATCHOR

TABLE TALK

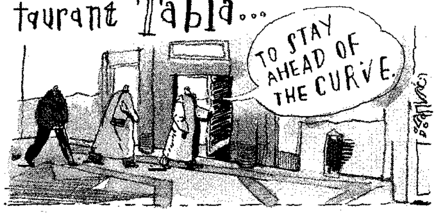
HOT FUSION

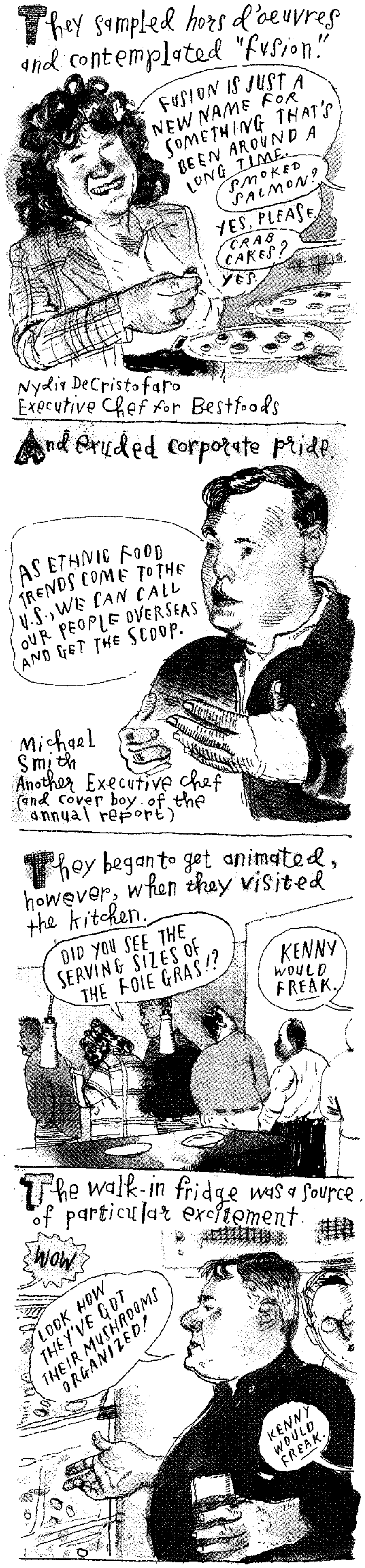
OR

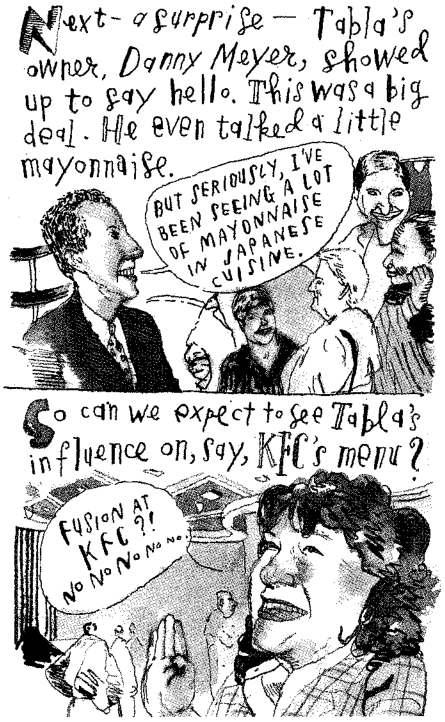
TWELVE HUNGRY MEN

(AND WOMEN)

A dozen chefs from Bestfoods (the people who bring you Hellman's mayonnaise, and also prepare customized entrées for Applebee's, Taco Bell, and KFC) recently took a research trip to the trendy new Indian/American restaurant Tabla...

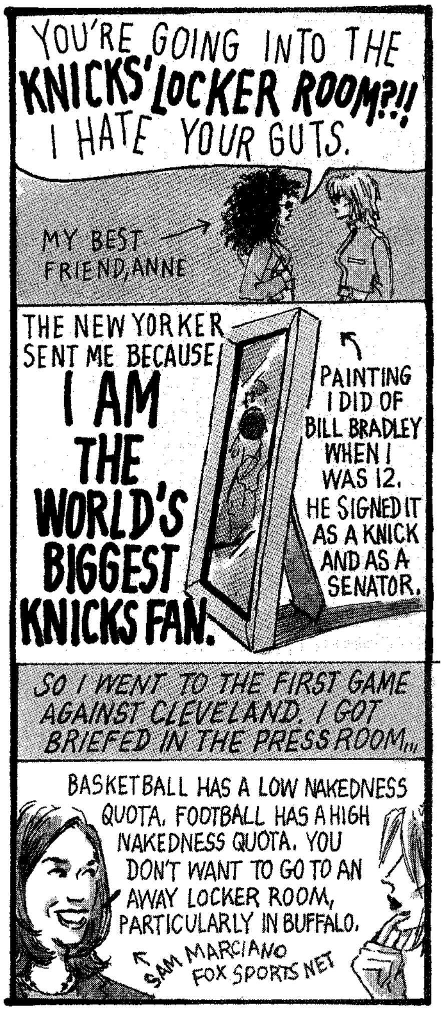

TO STAY AHEAD OF THE CURVE.

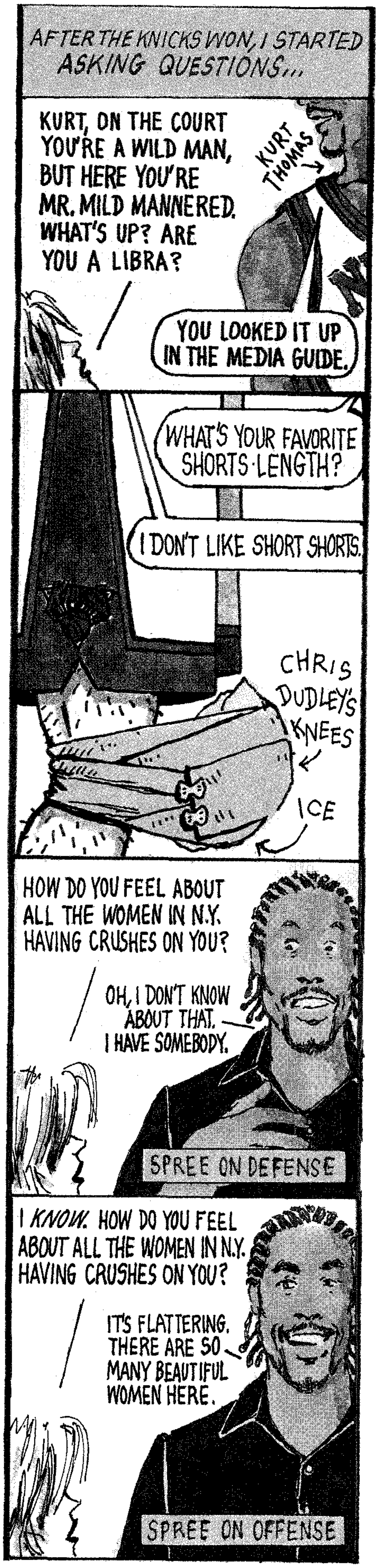

They sampled hors d'oeuvres and contemplated "fusion."
FUSION IS JUST A NEW NAME FOR SOMETHING THAT'S BEEN AROUND A LONG TIME.
SMOKED SALMON?
YES, PLEASE.
CRAB CAKES?
YES.
Nydia DeCristofaro
Executive Chef for Bestfoods
And exuded corporate pride.
AS ETHNIC FOOD TRENDS COME TO THE U.S., WE CAN CALL OUR PEOPLE OVERSEAS AND GET THE SCOOP.
Michael Smith
Another Executive Chef
(and cover boy of the annual report)
They began to get animated, however, when they visited the kitchen.
DID YOU SEE THE SERVING SIZES OF THE FOIE GRAS!?
KENNY WOULD FREAK.
The walk-in fridge was a source of particular excitement.
WOW
LOOK HOW THEY'VE GOT THEIR MUSHROOMS ORGANIZED!
KENNY WOULD FREAK.

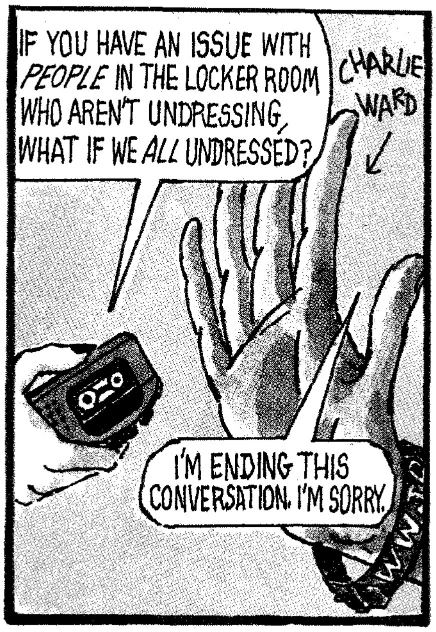

Next—a surprise—Tabla's owner, Danny Meyer, showed up to say hello. This was a big deal. He even talked a little mayonnaise.
BUT SERIOUSLY, I'VE BEEN SEEING A LOT OF MAYONNAISE IN JAPANESE CUISINE.
So can we expect to see Tabla's influence on, say, KFC's menu?
FUSION AT KFC?! NO NO NO NO NO.

—BARRY BLITT

THE SPORTING LIFE


YOU'RE GOING INTO THE KNICKS' LOCKER ROOM?!! I HATE YOUR GUTS.
MY BEST FRIEND, ANNE
THE NEW YORKER SENT ME BECAUSE I AM THE WORLD'S BIGGEST KNICKS FAN.
PAINTING I DID OF BILL BRADLEY WHEN I WAS 12. HE SIGNED IT AS A KNICK AND AS A SENATOR.
SO I WENT TO THE FIRST GAME AGAINST CLEVELAND. I GOT BRIEFED IN THE PRESS ROOM...
BASKETBALL HAS A LOW NAKEDNESS QUOTA. FOOTBALL HAS A HIGH NAKEDNESS QUOTA. YOU DON'T WANT TO GO TO AN AWAY LOCKER ROOM, PARTICULARLY IN BUFFALO.
SAM MARCIANO
FOX SPORTS NET

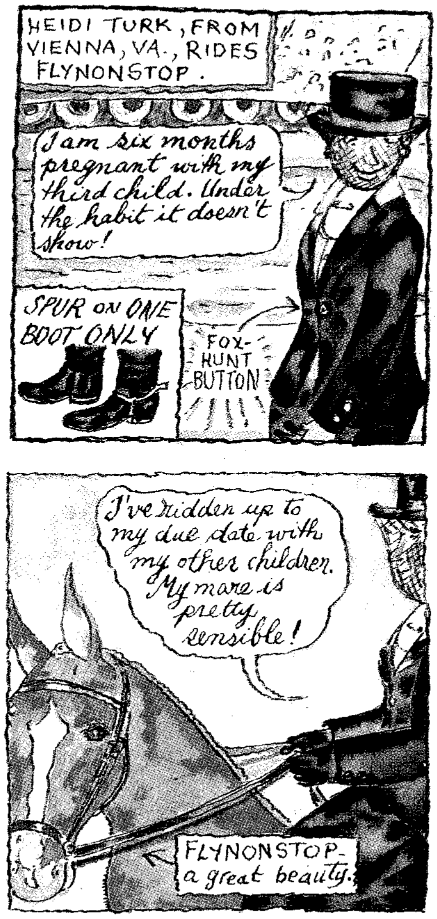

AFTER THE KNICKS WON, I STARTED ASKING QUESTIONS...
KURT, ON THE COURT YOU'RE A WILD MAN, BUT HERE YOU'RE MR. MILD MANNERED. WHAT'S UP? ARE YOU A LIBRA?
KURT THOMAS
YOU LOOKED IT UP IN THE MEDIA GUIDE.
WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE SHORTS-LENGTH?
I DON'T LIKE SHORT SHORTS.
CHRIS DUDLEY'S KNEES
ICE
HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT ALL THE WOMEN IN N.Y. HAVING CRUSHES ON YOU?
OH, I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT. I HAVE SOMEBODY.
SPREE ON DEFENSE
I KNOW. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT ALL THE WOMEN IN N.Y. HAVING CRUSHES ON YOU?
IT'S FLATTERING. THERE ARE SO MANY BEAUTIFUL WOMEN HERE.
SPREE ON OFFENSE

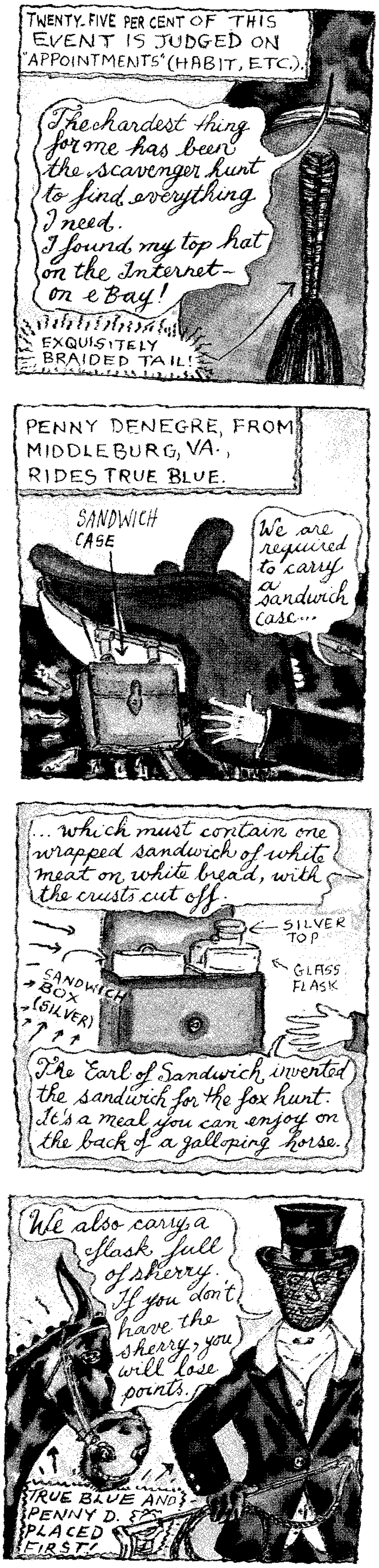

IF YOU HAVE AN ISSUE WITH PEOPLE IN THE LOCKER ROOM WHO AREN'T UNDRESSING, WHAT IF WE ALL UNDRESSED?
CHARLIE WARD
I'M ENDING THIS CONVERSATION. I'M SORRY.
WWJD

—Marisa Acocella

DEPT. OF EQUITATION

A visit to the National Horse Show at Madison Square Garden: Ladies Side Saddle Under Saddle Event, November 5, 1999.


HEIDI TURK, FROM VIENNA, VA., RIDES FLYNONSTOP.
I am six months pregnant with my third child. Under the habit it doesn't show!
SPUR ON ONE BOOT ONLY
FOX-HUNT BUTTON
I've ridden up to my due date with my other children. My mare is pretty sensible!
FLYNONSTOP— a great beauty.


TWENTY-FIVE PER CENT OF THIS EVENT IS JUDGED ON "APPOINTMENTS" (HABIT, ETC.).
The hardest thing for me has been the scavenger hunt to find everything I need. I found my top hat on the Internet— on eBay!
EXQUISITELY BRAIDED TAIL!
PENNY DENEGRE, FROM MIDDLEBURG, VA., RIDES TRUE BLUE.
SANDWICH CASE
We are required to carry a sandwich case...
...which must contain one wrapped sandwich of white meat on white bread, with the crusts cut off.
SILVER TOP
GLASS FLASK
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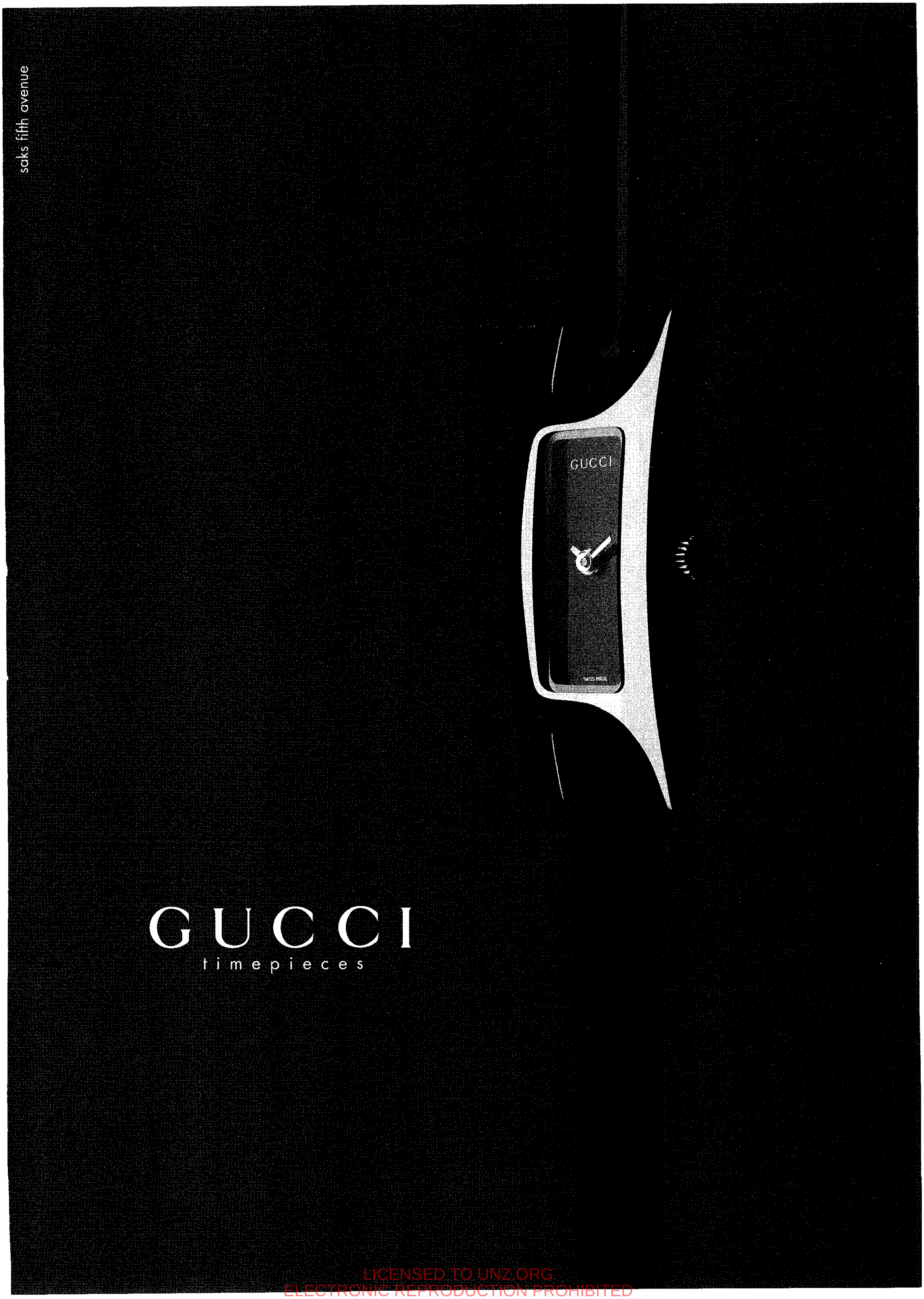
The Earl of Sandwich invented the sandwich for the fox hunt. It's a meal you can enjoy on the back of a galloping horse.
We also carry a flask full of sherry. If you don't have the sherry, you will lose points.
TRUE BLUE AND PENNY D. PLACED FIRST!

—Victoria Roberts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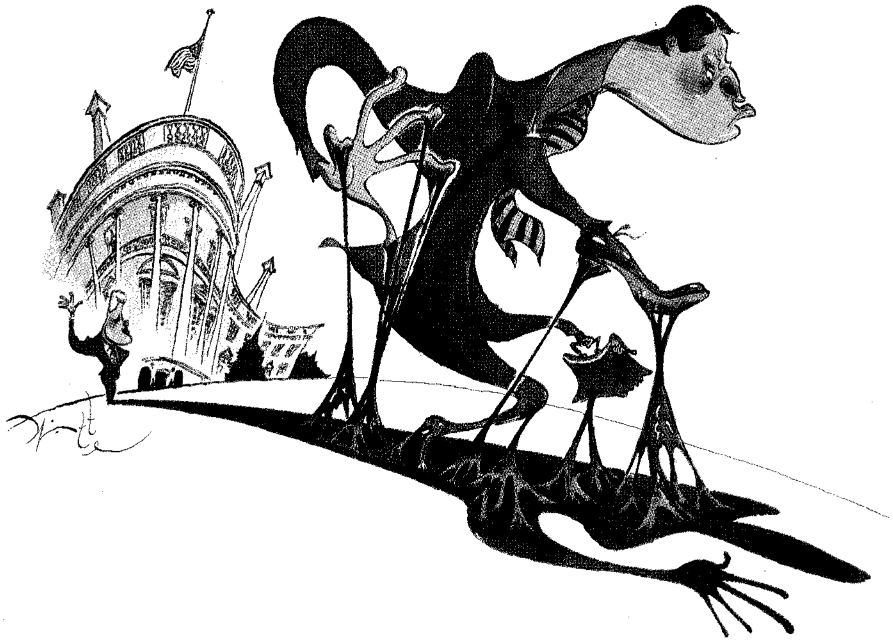
THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL

THE ANXIETY OF INFLUENCE

Why Al Gore's toughest opponent may be Bill Clinton.

BY JOE KLEIN AND JANE MAYER



MICHAEL WITTE

IT was the fattest of softballs, affably tossed by the host of a New Hampshire morning interview show, a woman with one of those perfectly mentholated public-radio voices: What in your background has prepared you for the Presidency?

"Well, I've travelled this country quite a bit," Albert Gore, Jr., replied in equally mellow tones. "I've had thousands of open meetings with people who've told me of their hopes and dreams for this country. I've served eight years in the Congress, eight years in the Senate, and seven years as Vice-President. Before that, I was a journalist; before that I was a Vietnam veteran. My wife, Tipper, and I have four children. We have been married for twenty-nine years, thirty years next spring, and we have three girls and a boy. Our youngest is now a junior in high school; our oldest just made us grandparents for the first time. Our grandson, Wyatt Gore Schiff, was born on the Fourth of July. He had impeccable timing. And I just spent another couple of hours with him the night before last, and I am learning the joys of grandfatherhood."

This was not exactly a response that would inflame the electorate. It seemed condescending, almost intentionally banal, as much of the Vice-President's odd, tortured campaign has this year. More to the point, Gore appeared to be tiptoeing around the most compelling argument in favor of his candidacy: he is better prepared for the Presidency than any of his opponents. He has spent the past seven years watching, and helping, Bill Clinton do the job. He has been, arguably, the most active and influential Vice-President in history. He played a central and, by nearly every account, admirable role in the signal moments of the Clinton Administration: the 1993 debate over economic and budget policy, which helped fix the national economy on its prosperous course; the 1994 debate over United States involvement in Bosnia; the debates over welfare reform and deficit reduction, free trade and global warming. In fact, Al Gore emerges as a model of sanity and intelligence in almost every one of the "insider" books about the Clinton White House—an Administration that has enjoyed the highest sustained public-approval ratings in modern history. "I am completely confident that every time he is confronted with a tough policy question he will study the options wisely and quickly, and make the right choice," one of Gore's closest advisers says. "That's something I try to keep in mind when I see him dressing in earth tones and doing all these awkward, stupid, gimmicky campaign things: I remind myself that he may not be a terrific campaigner, but he's a truly gifted public servant who would make an excellent President."

This is the best argument in favor of Al Gore's candidacy. It is the simplest argument a candidate for President can make. It is probably the only argument a sitting Vice-President can make. And yet Gore has been notably uncomfortable making it. He is more likely to discuss his differences and disappointments with the Clinton Administration than his role in its many successes. He is stymied, friends say, by his anger and resentment toward the President, which is monumental—"a perpetual state of mad," a recently departed adviser says.

The once close relationship between Clinton and Gore has cooled. Their regular lunches have stopped (in part because Gore has been spending so much time on the road). The President and his aides are increasingly disdainful of the Vice-President's political skills, and they wince at Gore's awkwardness. One operative metaphor is that Gore is like "a white liberal talking to black people." For his part, the Vice-President has taken to portraying himself in private as the ultimate victim of the Clinton scandals. "Gore's relationship to Clinton is the single most interesting, most fraught relationship of the campaign," says a prominent Democrat who has advised both men. "It affects everything Gore does, and it's been his biggest problem."

In the past six months, Gore has shed a series of longtime advisers and replaced them with a new team, some of whom have gaudy histories as Clinton critics. The Vice-President appears to be not just a politician who relies on consultants to instruct him how to perform in public—a common enough practice—but, far more troubling, a man who hires people to tell him who he is. Gore's performance has surprised and saddened even some of his closest associates. "This has been the worst experience of my professional life," says

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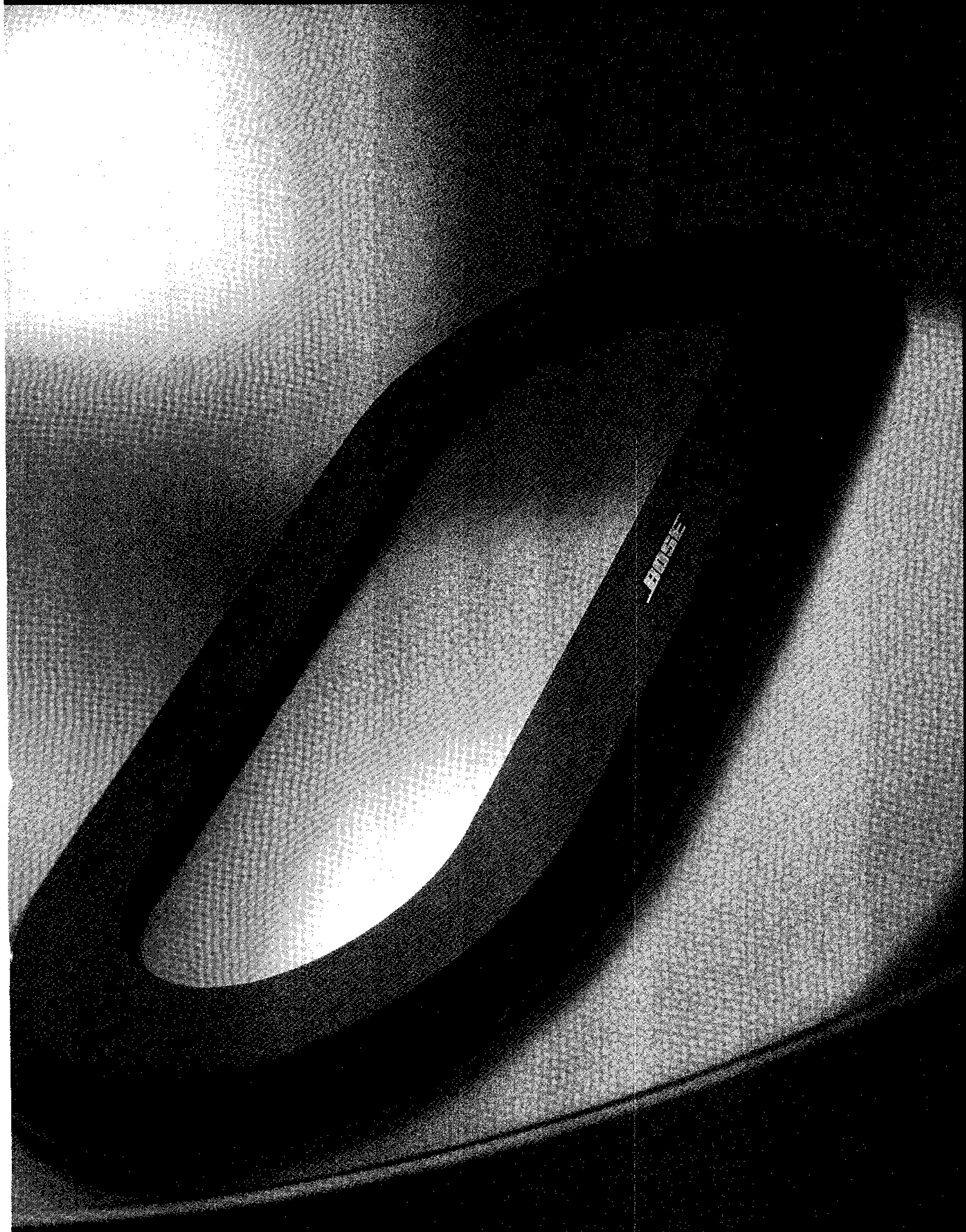

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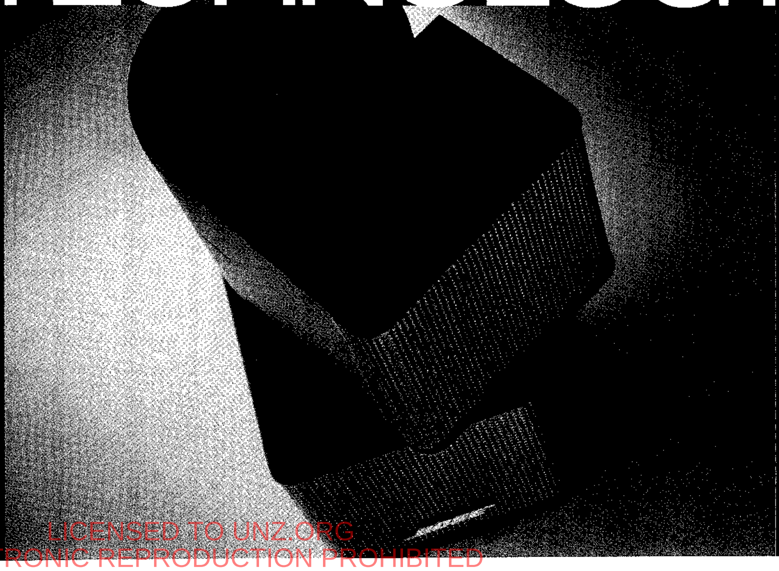

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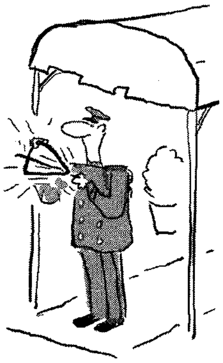
one adviser who has got lost in the shuffles. "It's not as if he'd just decided yesterday to run for President. He had years to set his team. So why all the thrashing and gnashing? Why does he replace the people who've been with him for years with strangers, right at the moment that the race begins? What does it say about Al?"

Arguments over strategy, staffing, salaries, and political tradecraft are the dust motes of political campaigns. They tend to consume only a small, demented community of tactics addicts—mainly other political consultants and the political press. In this case, however, the chaos attending the Vice-President's candidacy raises an essential question: If Al Gore cannot manage a Presidential campaign, how can he manage the country?

THE hiring and firing of dozens of political consultants and longtime staff members is bound to raise a few welts, and there are more than a few former Gore employees wandering about Washington these days, nursing contusions and willing to talk (but not for the record, of course). Some are angry, but more of them—especially those whose experience with the Vice-President extends back, before the current campaign—seem wistful: they have great respect and lingering affection for Gore, and they tend to tell the same story about how and why things got so screwed up. "His big problem is with Clinton, and it is incredibly personal," says one, echoing the consensus. "Emerging from Clinton's shadow is fundamental for Gore. This business about standing on his own two feet is about his father, not about the present." Comparing this race to Gore's first campaign for Congress, in Tennessee in 1976, this person said, "He didn't want to win on his father's name, and he won't let Clinton do it for him, either. It's like the sword in the stone with him. But he has made this problem extremely important. He is dealing with it every day. It's self-inflicted."



We visited the Vice-President in his White House office on a warm afternoon in early November. Gore was dressed in a blue suit, a blue shirt, and a solid wine-red tie—no earth tones, but he was wearing black cowboy boots. He looked fit and seemed confident, and he spoke easily about the difference between his style and the President's. "Bill Clinton sees a car going down the street and he says, 'What are the political implications of that car?' " Gore said, with a chuckle. "I see a car going down the street and I think, How can we replace the internal-combustion engine on that car?"

Gore defended his decision to deemphasize his role as Vice-President in the campaign. "I think it's simply less relevant to constantly reiterate the successes the Clinton-Gore Administration has had in the past," he said. "I'm proud of them . . . I embrace them. But it's not my core message, O.K.?"

When we asked what role the President should have in the campaign, the Vice-President made a curious connection to his father's role in his first congressional campaign. "I asked my father not to campaign, not to make a single speech for me," he told us. "My dad chafed at that a bit. He argued with me. I was in danger of hurting his feelings. But it was the right thing to do. I had to have my own clear line of communications with the voters."

THERE has always been an element of psychodrama in Al Gore's public appearances. At the 1992 and the 1996 Democratic Conventions, he delivered remarkably personal speeches, about his son's near-fatal accident and his sister's death from lung cancer. Long before the writer Naomi Wolf arrived to limn the latest auras, there was Jane Hopkins, a motivational psychobabbler whom Gore maintained on his White House staff. And Gore had previously found solace in Alice Miller's "The Drama of the Gifted Child," a volume whose title seemed to encapsulate the Vice-President's perpetual dilemma as a public figure: he always seemed more a student—a brilliant one, of course—than a teacher, more a protégé than a mentor, more someone's son than someone's father.

Protégédom is an inherently Vice-Presidential quality. And, friends say, Gore fell into the role as Clinton's No. 2

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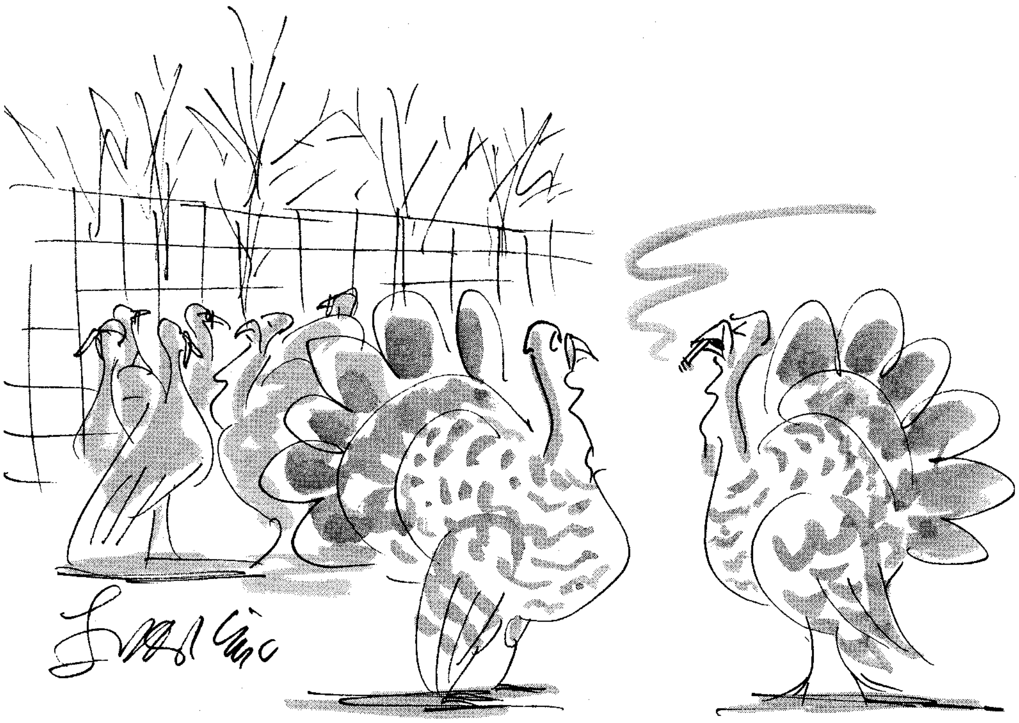

"So what. Nobody lives forever."

• •

naturally. In the early summer of 1992, he emerged from their first meetings—his job interviews—agog at Clinton's political and policy knowledge. Clinton was pleased as well: Gore was just like him—young, smart, wonky—and their areas of interest complemented each other. It was almost as if Clinton had picked himself to be Vice-President. The campaign, which was running third, behind George Bush and Ross Perot, the day Gore was selected, suddenly gained steam. There was euphoria as Clinton and Gore swept out from the Democratic Convention on their bus tour. Behind the scenes, though, there were the first signs of tension. Gore was successfully battling the Clinton staff, particularly Hillary's adviser Susan Thomases, for the right to travel with the A team, rather than being sent off to wallow in the hinterlands, as Vice-Presidential candidates usually are. This was the first of many conflicts with the First Lady and her staff, a struggle that grew intense in the autumn of 1993, as Hillary Clinton and Gore vied for the President's time in support of their big projects—health-care reform and "reinventing government," respectively.

Still, Gore was a famously loyal and respectful Vice-President. He provided the moral and intellectual ballast in many of its most serious policy fights. He exerted constant pressure on Clinton to stop dithering and get with the program, as Bob Woodward reported in "The Agenda," his book about the 1993 budget fight. He was also the strongest voice in the White House for intervention in Bosnia. On these and other issues, a Cabinet member recalls, Gore was selfless: "Unlike most other politicians, instead of taking too much credit, he took too little."

The relationship between Gore and Clinton was friendly but wary. Gore sometimes cringed at Clinton's wanton empathy; Clinton once told aides that he wondered "how you could get so far in politics" and be as tone-deaf as Gore sometimes seemed. But the alliance was an extraordinary one, and Clinton was determined to be far more generous than previous Presidents had been when it came time for their Vice-Presidents to run for the top spot. He gave Gore greater power over the Administration's second-term appointments, and in some cases went as far as to limit his own range of action in order to help Gore's prospects. He became the first President in recent history to endorse his Vice-President even before the contest began.

THERE was bound to be tension in the transition from beta to alpha—to coin a phrase—and these worries began to nibble away at Gore's confidence as early as the 1996 Democratic Convention. Dick Morris, the former Clinton adviser who has become a frequent critic of the Administration, says that Gore was reluctant to take the spotlight, to have his own "night" to make a speech. (In the past, a Vice-President had merely been a warmup act for the Presidential nominee's acceptance speech.) "He was afraid he might screw it up," Morris says. "There's a tremendous insecurity at the root of Al Gore."

His emotional account of the death of his sister from lung cancer was well received by the public, but reporters, to say nothing of Republicans, were quick to note an anomaly in the tale: Gore continued to favor—indeed, his family continued to profit from—tobacco-farming allotments long after he says he decided that the fight against tobacco was a moral crusade. (And now his purity on the tobacco issue has been questioned again, with the return to his campaign staff of Carter Eskew, an old friend and talented strategist who also worked for tobacco companies.)

"Al was saved by the Morris toe-sucking business," a friend says, referring to the revelation, in the midst of the 1996 Convention, that Dick Morris had been paying a prostitute for pedal sex. "That took some steam out of the story, but he and Tipper were startled by the press reaction—the scorn and ridicule. He'd always been taken seriously before that. I think his confidence began to falter, and it has been going steadily downhill ever since."

Gore's reputation for integrity came under assault not long after the 1996 Presidential campaign ended. He was accused of accepting illegal donations from Taiwanese sources when he visited a Buddhist temple in Los Angeles, and then he was accused of making fund-raising calls from his White House of-

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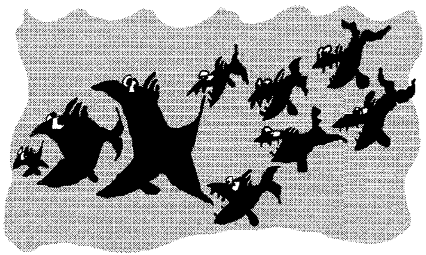
fice. (Opponents argued, somewhat implausibly, that this was a violation of the Pendleton Act, an 1883 statute that sought to prevent federal workers from being shaken down by their bosses.) The latter charge caused Gore a moment of deep humiliation. After consulting a staff attorney—and against the advice of the rest of his staff—he rushed into the White House press room and said, animatronically, "There's no controlling legal authority" to defend his actions. This may have been a defining moment for Gore: he was the opposite of cool, the opposite of Clinton, a mortal clod. Soon afterward, Gore stumbled through the public moments of a state visit to China—including the embarrassing, if unavoidable, champagne toast with Prime Minister Li Peng. Once again, the press verdict was scornful; Gore was stung. "He's very good on television," a White House aide said, "but he stopped granting interviews defending the Administration for almost a year after that."

Gore's public reaction to the Lewinsky scandal was stalwart, unexceptionable, loyal perhaps to a fault. On the day Clinton was impeached, Gore attended a White House pep rally and said that Clinton would be remembered as "one of our greatest Presidents," a remark that he has had to defend repeatedly—especially as he has attempted, belatedly, to express his "anger and disappointment" with Clinton's behavior. In private, friends say, the reactions of both Al and Tipper were significantly deeper than mere anger. There was scorn and disgust as well. "Gore was in pain about Clinton's behavior," a friend recalls, "the same way most politicians with teenage daughters were."

By the spring of 1999, Gore had become gloomy and irritated; he snapped at his campaign advisers continually. He sulked, embarrassed, for months after claiming that he had taken "the initiative" in "creating" the Internet—a claim that was quickly seized upon by Republicans and late-night comedians. (When asked in the debate with Bill Bradley about the worst mistake he'd ever made in politics, Gore—incredibly—mentioned the Internet gaffe.) The Vice-President was growing impatient with the droopy trajectory of the campaign. "We had a meeting at the Vice-President's house in early March," an aide says. "It was all about Bush, how we were so far behind in the polls and had to catch up. We weren't paying much attention to Bradley at that point, but there was some concern that if we didn't start to close the gap with Bush, Democrats might start getting antsy." It was decided that Gore would announce his candidacy early—in June—and also give a series of substantive speeches, to reinforce his image as a serious, thoughtful public figure (as opposed to both Bradley and George W. Bush, who had offered no detailed positions at that point).

Gore gave the speeches, which were admirably detailed, but it didn't help with the polls: the public wasn't listening yet. At the same time, another theory apparently was festering in the Vice-President's mind: he was lagging in the polls because of "Clinton fatigue." He needed to "separate" himself from the President. The earliest advocate of this position in the Gore camp was an adviser whom most of Gore's other advisers weren't even aware of: a dynamic, eloquent thirty-seven-year-old feminist named Naomi Wolf. (Wolf says that six months of secrecy was written into her consulting contract, "because I wanted the transitional time to close down my shop as an independent commentator.")

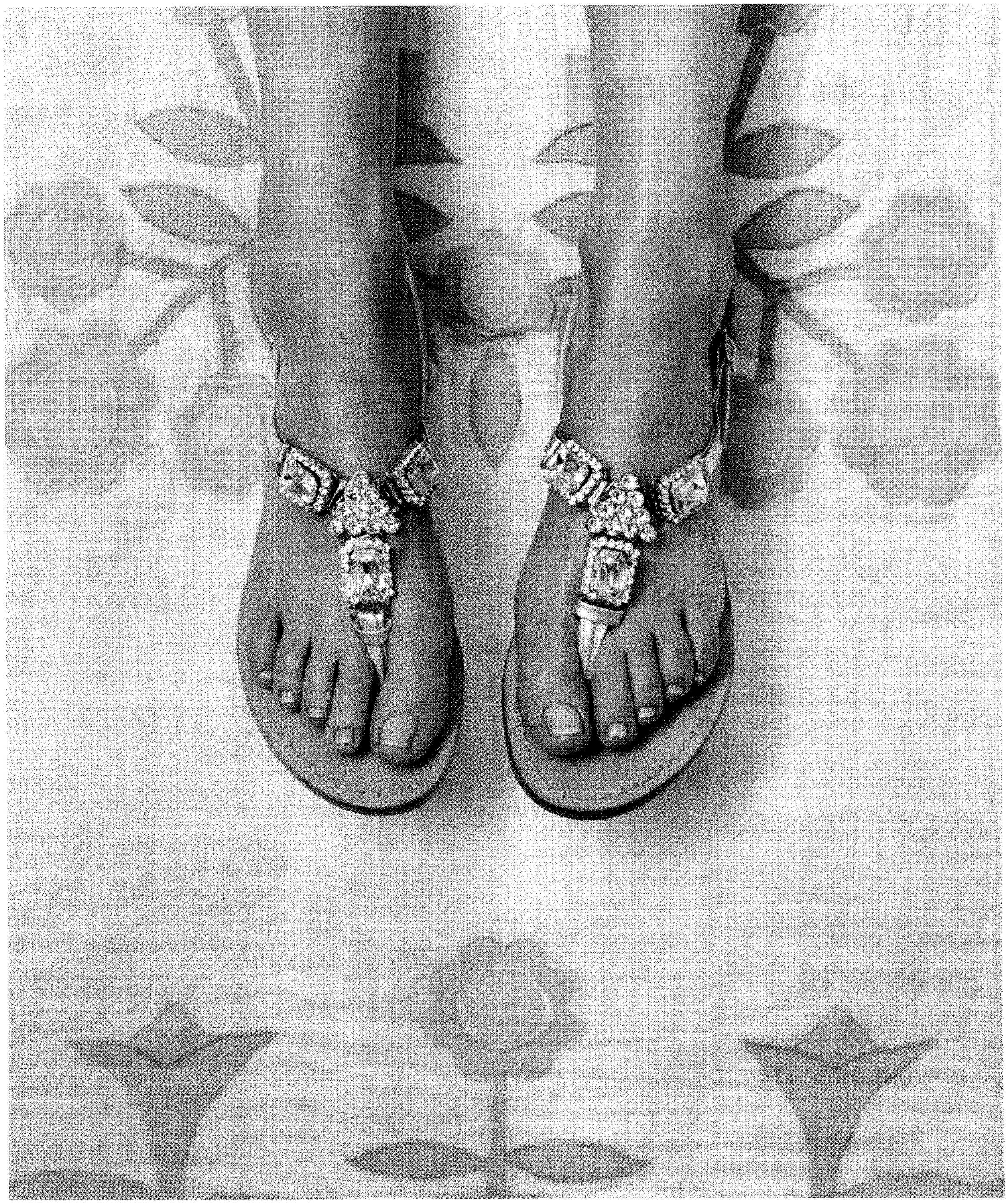
In the summer of 1998, a young Gore communications adviser, Eli Attie, read a column by Wolf in the magazine *George* and showed it to the boss. In it Wolf argued that the wonky environmental issues for which Gore was often ridiculed—like global warming—were in fact popular with younger voters. Gore invited Wolf to his home, and she quickly ingratiated herself, not just with the Vice-President but with his wife and daughters as well. Soon Wolf added a second line of advice to her "Let Gore Be Wonky" formulation. "Naomi won an enormous seat at the table by being the first person to tell Gore that Clinton was a huge 'structural' problem that he'd have to overcome," a longtime adviser says. "She became the most important, influential person in the campaign, other than Carter Eskew. Gore finds her insightful, brilliant, and perceptive."



As a feminist, Wolf had been incensed—and said so, publicly—by what she saw as Clinton's corruption of the workplace through his sexual favoritism. She believed that, as soon as the threat of impeachment passed, the nation would recoil against the President and, by extension, against his Vice-President. This view was in direct opposition to the advice offered by Mark Penn, who was then serving as both Clinton's pollster and Gore's. He was finding that Clinton's public approval continued to run strong, even in the darkest moments of the Lewinsky disaster. Penn also found that there was a very high correlation between Clinton's strongest supporters and Gore's strongest supporters. To be sure, there was significant anger with the President in the Democratic electorate as well. But if Gore separated himself from Clinton he ran the risk of separating himself from his own base.

There was another theory that Wolf had, although she disputes its importance: the now infamous analogy of the alpha male and the beta male, which posited the President as a rival to the Vice-President and an obstacle to his advancement. Gore was much taken with this, a former adviser says, and spent "the first six months of the campaign brooding about Clinton" instead of taking on Bradley, John McCain, and Bush.

By late spring, Gore's candidacy appeared perilously boggled. New consultants seemed to arrive every day—there were half a dozen pollsters under contract, half a dozen campaign spokespeople, a shifting army of media consultants. The old-time Gore associate Peter Knight, for example, who had expected to be named campaign chairman (the role he had filled in the 1996 Clinton-Gore campaign), was pushed aside in favor of the former congressman Tony Coelho. Both Knight and Coelho seemed questionable choices; each was deeply embedded in Washington's lobbying culture and each had been the subject of investigations into possible financial improprieties. Bob Squier,



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Gore's longtime media consultant, was messily replaced by his former partner Carter Eskew (who had been tossed aside by Gore once before) and by Robert Shrum.

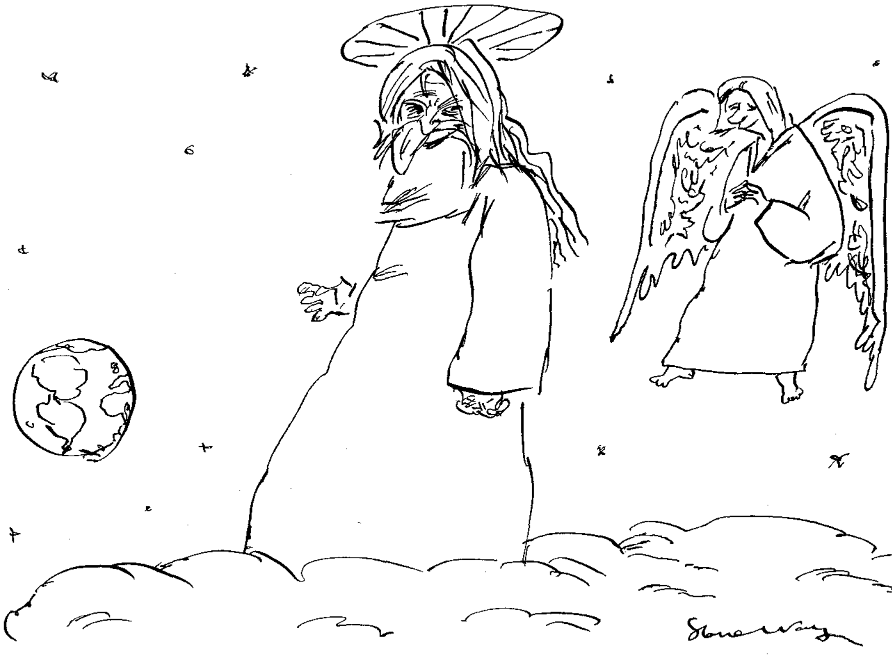
"This sort of campaign is nothing new for Gore," says Raymond Strother, who was one of a string of consultants hired and then replaced by Gore in 1988. "He's always switching around, looking for miracles, looking for a silver bullet. Somehow, he always manages to give the public impression that the consultants are in control."

And, indeed, Gore was just beginning his reshuffling. More consultants came and went during the summer and early autumn, but with a certain tropism: Clinton associates were replaced by Clinton opponents. Craig Smith, a Clinton operative since Arkansas, was replaced as campaign manager by Donna Brazile, a liberal activist who had been quietly disdainful of Clinton from the start. Mark Penn, the President's pollster, was replaced by Harrison Hickman, who had been suspended by Senator Bob Kerrey during the 1992 Presidential campaign for spreading anti-Clinton rumors.

Somehow, the significant moments of the Gore campaign became opportunities to "separate" himself from the President. On the day Gore announced his candidacy, last June, he gave an extended interview to Diane Sawyer—against the advice of some staff people, who, correctly, believed that the interview, rather than the announcement speech, would become the story—in which he said that the President's behavior in the Lewinsky affair was "inexcusable." He made an even stronger statement during his first debate with Bradley: in response to the very first question, an oblique reference by a Bradley supporter to the Clinton Administration scandals, Gore repeated that he had been "disappointed and angry" by the President's behavior.

In the course of that answer, Gore also described the President as his friend, as he often does. He said that he was proud of what the Administration has accomplished, as he often does. But, an hour after the debate was over, when Gore was sitting on the stage of the Moore Theatre, at Dartmouth College, chatting amiably with some students, his arm around Tipper, he slipped—unbidden—into what seemed a telling rumination about politicians in general. "An awful lot of people get into politics because they need approval," he said. "They're desperate for it. The need to make themselves whole some way. . . . But if you're looking for personal fulfillment in the approval of others you've got some work to do."

SITTING in his White House office, Gore admitted that he had made some serious mistakes. He said that he had not been "emotionally present" during the early months of his Presidential campaign because of the distractions of 1998, and that, in February, after the impeachment proceedings fizzled, when he did begin to look more closely, he was displeased with the way things were going. By late September, he was desperate. "I made the decision to do something radical . . . one night with Tipper," Gore said. "And I actually looked at a verse in the Bible—Judges 7. Gideon is preparing to go into battle against a larger army. And the Lord says to Gideon, 'You've got too many. Get rid of some of them.' And he says, 'Lord, he has more.' " The Lord, Gore said, put Gideon through another staff reduction before sending him off to victory. That night, Gore abruptly decided to move his headquarters from Washington to Nashville. "Now we have a campaign that is fifty-per-cent smaller in size and gives ten thousand per cent more than it did to a single purpose. . . . I may need a longer runway than some other politicians, but when I take off I can be pretty effective."



"Made it in six. Billed them for seven."

Indeed, Gore has been more effective in recent weeks. He can occasionally give the impression—as he did in the debate with Bradley—that he is trying too hard, but more often audiences seem impressed by the breadth of his knowledge and his willingness to listen and answer their questions. His long-term prospects have improved as well: his campaign team is confident that it can defeat Bill Bradley by hammering away at his ambitious health-insurance-reform proposal—from the right (it would cost too much) and from the left (it wouldn't "save" Medicare). And George W. Bush has come to seem less inevitable: his readiness for the Presidency is emerging as a significant question as the campaign progresses. But the strategy that might prove successful against Bush—Gore's experience versus Bush's lack of knowledge and maturity—is the very one the Vice-President has been avoiding, for reasons that seem as deeply personal as they are professional. "He's in a difficult position," Dick Morris says. "A sitting Vice-President has to separate himself from the President, and that's very hard to do. George Bush succeeded in 1988 only because he was able to

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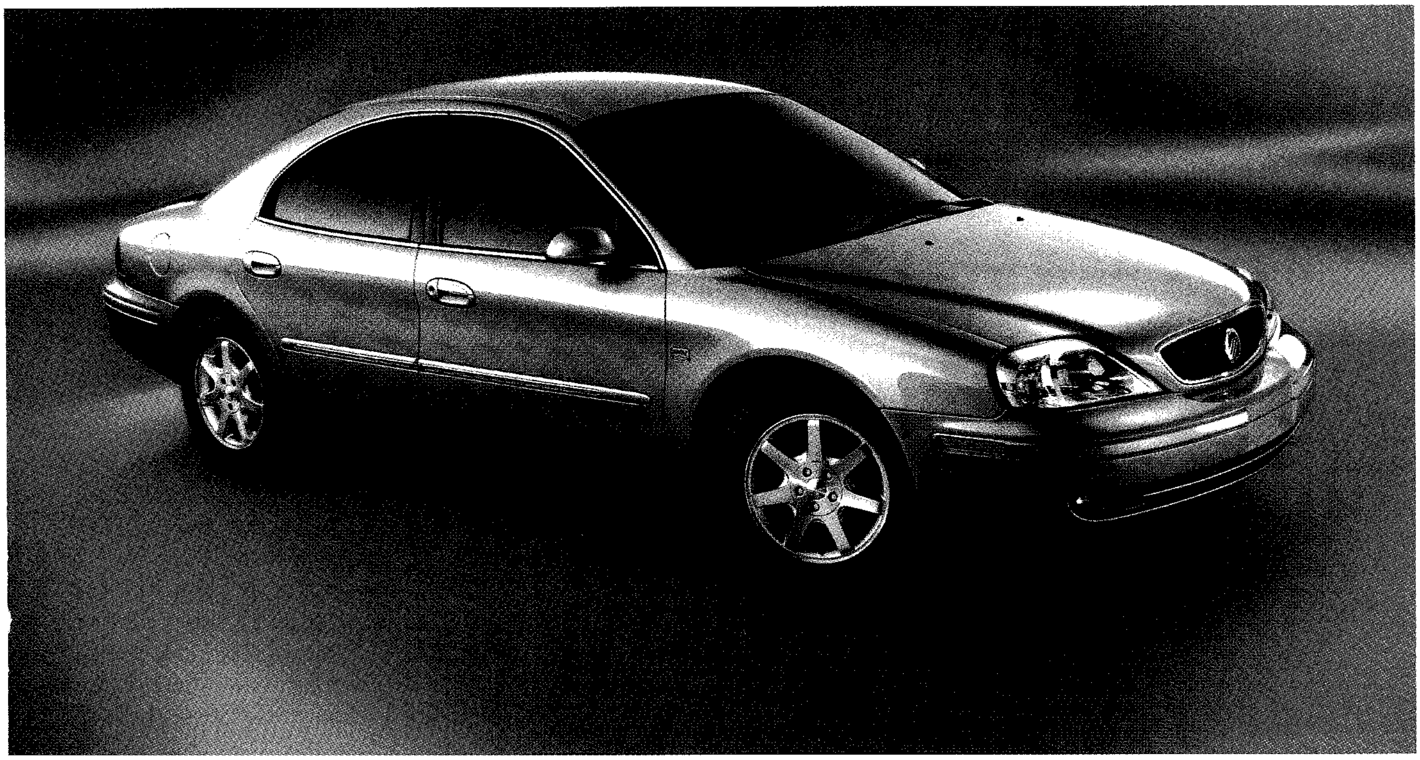

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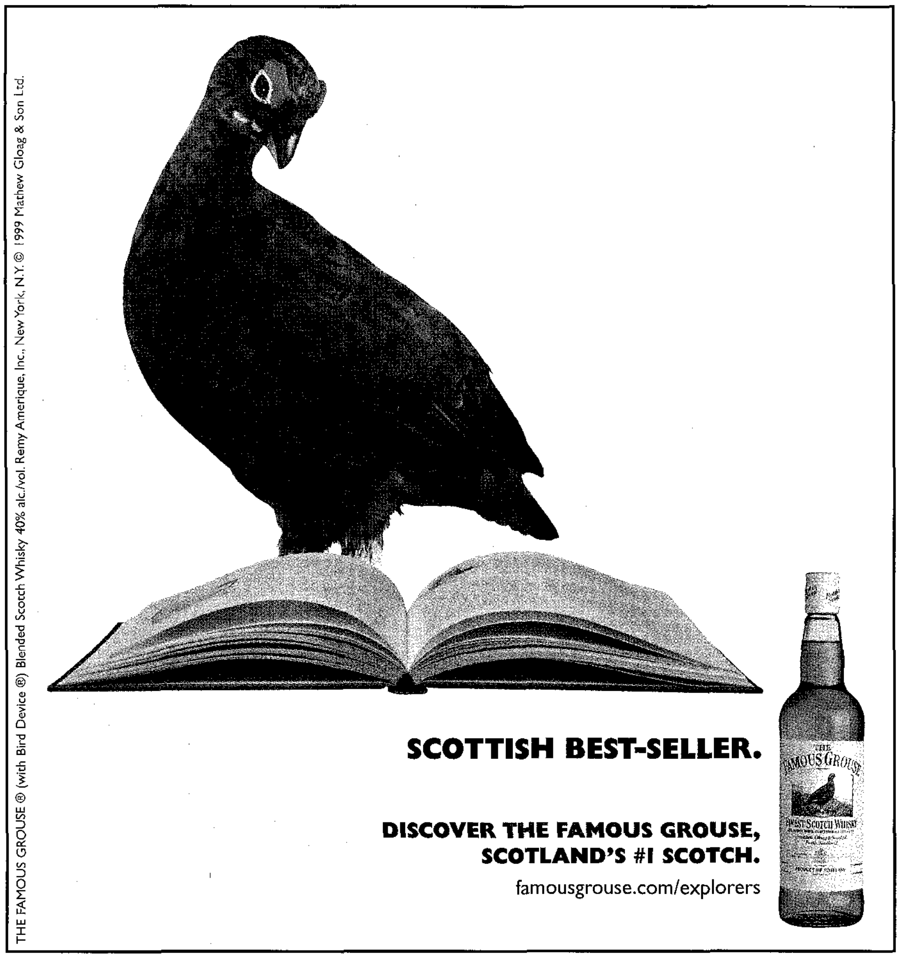

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distinguish himself from Reagan, and emphasize issues like crime and taxes."

But Bush never really distinguished himself from Reagan: he waited, impatiently sometimes, as Reagan suffered through the Iran-Contra scandal, which occurred at the same point in the Reagan Presidency as Lewinsky did in the Clinton Administration. The press battered the Vice-President for what *Newsweek* memorably labelled the "Wimp Factor"—and he languished in the polls, as much as seventeen points behind his Democratic opponent. "Oh, we talked about the problem all the time," Bob Teeter, Bush's pollster, said. "But they were short discussions. There was no way we could credibly 'separate' from Reagan. It was impossible. It would seem ungrateful. That took an awful lot of discipline, but, finally, in the summer of 1988, the focus shifted to the race at hand, Bush against Dukakis, and we were able to make our move."

Democrats disappointed by the Gore campaign have taken to citing another example of a politician who succeeded by stubbornly refusing to abandon his rather fusty image: Gray Davis, the governor of California. Davis was almost an afterthought in the 1998 primary campaign against two millionaires, a businessman and a popular congresswoman. "We found that the most important thing we had going for us was 'experience,'" says David Doak, who was a media consultant to the campaign. "No one wants to run on experience. It's not sexy. It's how town clerks get reëlected. But Gray liked it because it fit what he thought he was about—even though he knew people would make the jokes about his name, and maybe even overlook us at first. He was incredibly patient, incredibly disciplined. And it paid off: experience was what the public wanted."

Al Gore has been neither patient nor disciplined. He may already have sacrificed his strongest rationale for the Presidency: the decency, strength, and consistency of his character. "The campaign faced a strategic fork," one of the legion of former Gore advisers says. "It could have let Gore be himself, but instead it tried to reinvent him. So, instead of having the Gray Davis campaign, what you are now looking at is the New Nixon." ♦

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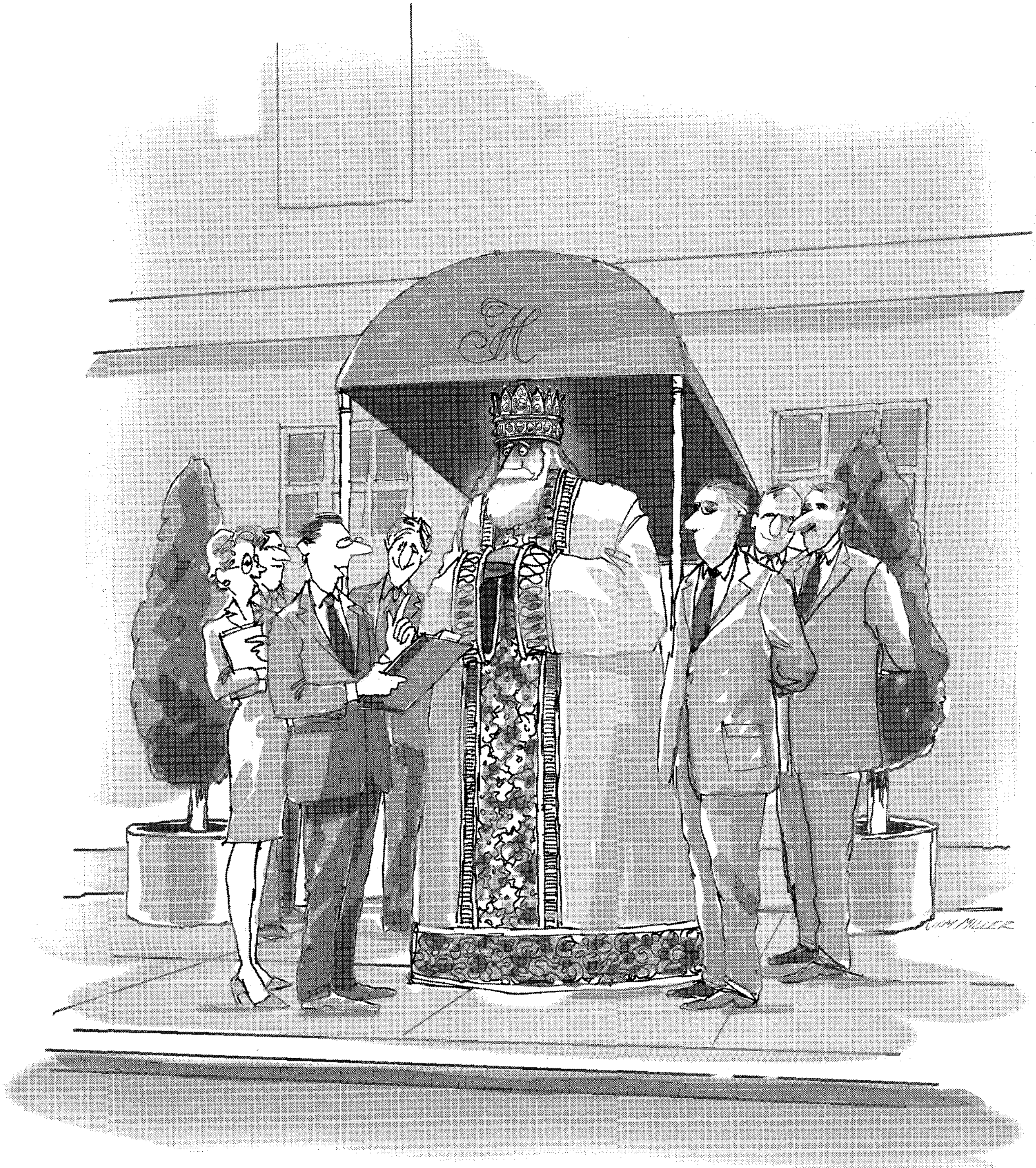

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HOME COOKING

Forget that E-ZPass World Series—not even the Mets were going to beat the best team of the nineties.

BY ROGER ANGELL

NOW that the bleacher brooms are put away and the Yankees have swept the Braves to win their third World Championship in four years, and have had themselves certified by Mayor Giuliani as the Team of the Nineties, as well as the Team of the Century and, no doubt, the Millennium and the Christian Era, friends of mine keep bringing up the Mets. Just think if those terrific Mets had been in there instead of the Braves, they say—if they'd won that sixth playoff game against Atlanta in extra innings, instead of losing it, and then the seventh for sure, and given New York its first subway series since 1956. "The E-ZPass World Series!" they say. "Just think of that!"

Well, I have been thinking of it, for weeks now, and all I can say is no—no, thanks. No way. It's not just that the Yankees would have won that World Series, too—I'm sure about this—but that the Mets would have found some weird or wild way to make things close in the process, and get our hopes up all over again and our fears as well. They'd have kept us up way too late again and made it impossible for us to sleep for a couple of hours after some game they'd just lost or won—who can believe they wouldn't have won a couple—and then the next night it would happen again, so that the shrivelling anxiety we'd feel along the way, we Mets fans and maybe by now Yankees fans as well, would be seen at last as more pain than pleasure, and so perhaps something we'd just as soon do without. "Why does it hurt so much?" the wanly smiling Mets fans kept asking each other each morning in late September and on into October. "It's great, but I don't think I can stand it anymore."

This is not a disparagement of the champions. These Yankees, whom we must now measure with the best and most celebrated teams in the annals, swept the Texas Rangers in the Divisional playoffs for the second year running (the Rangers have scored two runs in these fifty-four innings); then took care of the Red Sox in the American League Championships, losing but a single game along the way; and dismissed the Braves in four. They have won twelve consecutive World Series games, going back to the third game of the 1996 Series (also against the Braves), and twenty-two out of twenty-five post-season games in the past two years. This astounding run has not been quite as inevitable or imperious in the making as the totals make it appear—this was a better World Series than the blowout against the Padres last year—if only because these Yankees, who can count just one certain Hall of Famer on their roster (it is Roger Clemens), and another potential two or three, are human in their capabilities, and thus must find a way to win each game, instead of simply falling on their opponents the way the old Bronx Bombers used to do. They are teachers of baseball, I mean, not emperors, and thus endlessly interesting. What they can't do is sing opera, like the Mets. They don't make you hurt.

The Mets, let's remember, lost seven games in a row in the very late going, putting themselves on the lip of elimination as the National League wild-card entry. Somehow, they took their final three instead, and breezed through a tacked-on, one-game playoff against the Reds. They took care of the Arizona Diamondbacks—a wealthy, full-of-themselves expansion club, here in the Divisionals in only their second year of competition—in four games, but, appallingly, dropped the first three meetings of the Championships to the lordly Braves, who had treated them with a disdainful ferocity in all their recent encounters. The comeback fell short when the Mets could not hold a one-run lead in the tenth inning of the sixth game, back in Atlanta. But what will live on in the disorderly Metsian collective unconscious (yo, Lenny Dykstra!) are the

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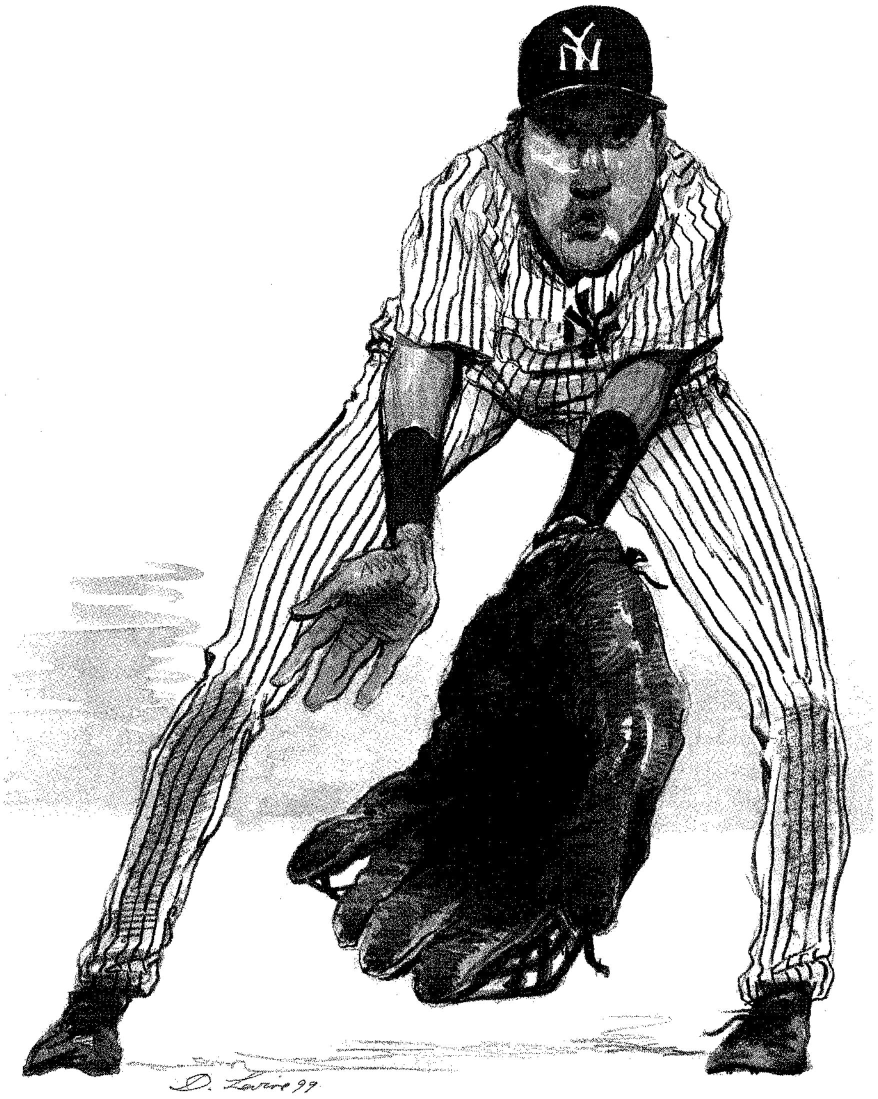
events of the prior Sunday night, the fifth game: the fifteen-inning win in the rain, which used up five hours and forty-six minutes and forty-five players—fifteen of them were pitchers—and culminated in Robin Ventura's grand-slam home run that was downgraded to a glorious single because of the Mets player celebrations out on the basepath. Down the left-field line, the fans were thrumming and bouncing below me, as if on a trampoline.



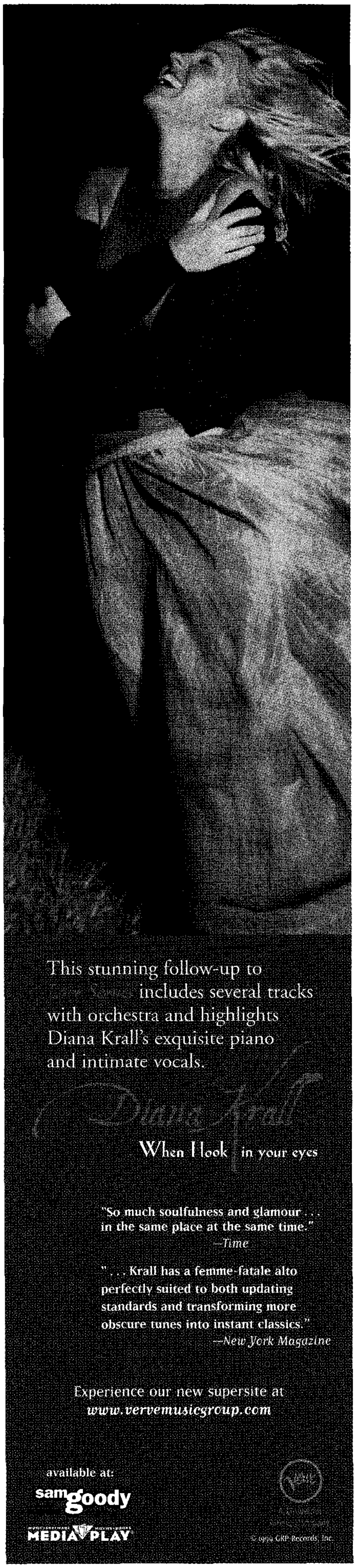
This is the way Derek Jeter's glove looks to the batter, who was almost sure he'd hit one past the Yankee shortstop this time. Sorry, batter.

DAVID LEVINE

Fragments of this game will come back to us, those of us who were there, for months to come—the sand-strewn mound and boggy outfield, the press corps scrabbling through the record books between pitches, towels waving in the Mets dugout, and the exhausted upper-deck fans, gleaming in their extemporized trash-bag raingear, whooping and falling dead silent with each swing of events. Later, the writers surrounded Shawon Dunston, who was sweating or weeping—you couldn't tell which—in his clubhouse cubicle. The thirty-six-year-old veteran, a supernumerary on this, his fifth major-league club, had led off the fifteenth and delivered the at-bat of a lifetime: nine minutes of anxiously flicked or banged fouls, which ended with a single at last, on the twelfth pitch. He stole second, too, and then, by various means—who cares about the plot of "Trovatore"?—became the essential tying run. "I'm just proud to be a major-league ballplayer," Dunston said oddly. He said it over and over.

Because the Mets won so many of these game-by-game extensions, only to die at the end, Mets fans may want to fall back on something less dire to tide themselves through the winter. An everyday sort of flag-down by shortstop Rey Ordóñez, say, who has almost done away with the error column in his résumé: perhaps the play when he slides to his right on one knee, or pops down with one leg fully outstretched, to backhand a sure single (hold it right there, my man), already rising as he does so to begin the throw. Or give us a couple of Turk Wendell's eccentric and defiant relief routines on the mound, with the rosin bag bounced and juggled off the back of his pitching hand, then slammed into the ground, the frantic arm-loosenings that make you think a grasshopper has suddenly crawled in under his shirt, and then, again and again, that super-slider to the outer corner of the plate. The Mike Piazza story brings us back to reality. Knocked flat in home-plate collisions, repeatedly dinged and dented by fouls, flopping full-length on his belly in pursuit of foul pops, the battle-worn catcher-slugger at last sat out a couple of games when an allergic reaction to a cortisone shot caused the thumb on his catching hand to swell to mango size. Back again, he took a whack on the wrist from a batter's follow-through. He hung in, swinging and throwing poorly by now, not doing much at the plate, and reminding you at last of that knight in "Monty Python and the Holy Grail" who keeps having body parts lopped off in battle but stays on to fight, spouting gore. Piazza managed a two-run, game-tying homer in the seventh inning of the Mets finale, but had to quit the field before the end, his sword on the ground.

Manager Bobby Valentine threw every star and dress extra of his into these extended dramas, and got some unexpected performances—notably from Melvin Mora, a slim, twenty-seven-year-old rookie outfielder, who threw out two base runners at home and another at third, stole bases with verve, and kept rallies alive with sudden singles and runs batted in. Give Valentine credit—to go along with the blame for expecting that his last pitcher of the year, the ineffable Kenny Rogers, would have the sand to throw a strike on a full count, with the bases loaded in the eleventh inning, and did not. This ending, a groan, confirmed something for veteran Mets fans, who had secretly suspected that the unreposeful manager, with his glistening smile, constricted shruggings, and inexorably self-referential asides, would somehow feature in the finish,



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just as he had at the start. Not quite two weeks earlier, Valentine had conducted an impromptu, full-crush media interview at the batting cage in Shea Stadium before the first home game of the Mets' unexpected post-season, zestfully defending himself against a recent *Sports Illustrated* article, in which he belittled his pitching coach and said that five of his players were born losers. Standing in this avid circle, I tried but failed to imagine the other New York manager, Joe Torre, getting himself into such a pickle and then seeming to revel in the scandal. I don't get Bobby Valentine.

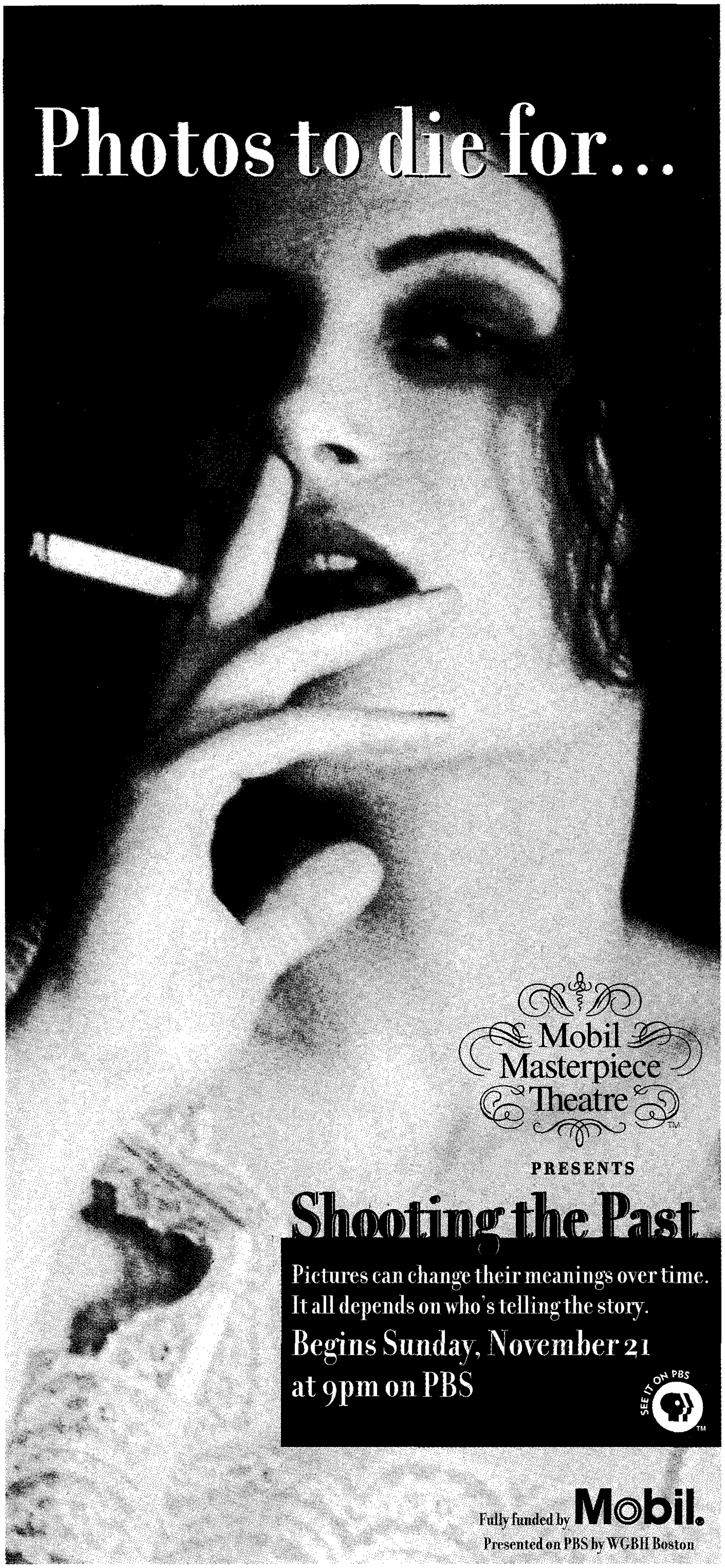
The Mets' failure to bring about an all-New York World Series spared us a thousand TV bites and feature stories about the moms and taverns and sociological makeup and choral capabilities of the two rival fan masses, but the Mets folks outdid the Yankees this October. Away from all this since 1988, the Shea people were funny and wolfish with their curses and placards ("FAT LADY YO MAMA" someone held up), and happily devoured the prognathous Atlanta closer, John Rocker (a great baseball name, perfect for the part), and Chipper Jones, the not-quite-lovable Atlanta star, who had unwisely let it be known that he had always hated his given name, Larry. "LARRY!" "LAR-RY!" "LAHH-REEE!" now fell upon him from every Shea tier and sector. By the third night at Shea, the game in the rain, fans were hanging out placards depicting the frazzled and frantic Larry Fine, of the Three Stooges. Later that night, I spotted some men and women in the stands gabbling excitedly into their cell phones. Could they be calling their babysitters at such a moment? Their brokers? No, it turned out, they were talking to other fans in other parts of the Stadium, networking bliss with friends they had come with or knew would be there: "My God, did you *see* that? Isn't it great? Isn't it something? I don't think I can stand this, honest I don't."

EIGHT years ago, I wrote a piece for this magazine about home runs—the easiest assignment of my life, it turned out. "Tell me a homer," I said to various players, fans, Hall of Famers, scouts, managers, and writers, and out would come another fabled or half-forgotten blast, with time and date, pitcher and score and weather still attached. No one hesitated; each eager respondent had the shining moment fresh at hand. I would never take on such a task today, for the individual home run has gone clean out of the game, lost in the showering barrage of downtowners and round-trippers—five thousand five hundred and twenty-eight of them this year, a gain of fifty-five per cent over a decade ago. Thirty home runs in a season used to be the level that divided a handful of élite sluggers from the rest of the pack. Only a dozen of them turned the trick in the year of my story; this year there were forty-five, including thirteen who banged forty or more. Every day this summer, it seemed, there was another outlandish or out-of-sightish homer headline. Robin Ventura hit a grand slam in each game of a doubleheader. Fernando Tatis, of the Cardinals, hit a pair of slams in one *inning*. The Red Sox' Nomar Garciaparra whacked two grand slams and a third, two-run homer in one game. The Reds hit nine home runs in one game, and added five more the next afternoon; and on August 9th five grand slams went out of five different parks—the most ever in a single day. Blame the pitchers, blame (perhaps) a more tightly wound ball, blame the beefed-up sluggers and the smaller new ballparks, blame Mark McGwire and Sammy Sosa, who again this year wound up at the top of the heap, with sixty-five and sixty-three, respectively, a tad below last year's epochal totals. "I don't know how many more years I can do this," Mark said. Or don't blame anybody: polls have shown that watching home runs has become the prime attraction of the game, the main reason fans come to the park in the first place. Homers are to baseball what car crashes and screen-blasting explosions have become to the movies: a great show, or a reason to stay home.

Any doubts I might feel in taking this un-American view have been washed away by the events of October, when the Yankees and the Braves, each with the best pitching in their league, again wound up in the finals; and the Mets, with the finest defense since Stalingrad (they made but sixty-eight errors all year), almost squeezed their way in at the end, instead. Pitching and defense, the first Lego pieces of the grand construction, are what you build on when the games matter. Sometimes it takes only one pitcher to make this point, especially if he is Pedro Martínez. Briefly sidelined by a sore back, the remarkable Red Sox right-hander entered the fourth inning of the deciding Divisional playoff game against Cleveland—by which time the Indians had already scored eight runs, including two monster homers by Jim Thome—and simply iced them: no hits, no nothing the rest of the way, while his teammates grabbed the lead and won, 12–8. The Indians, a major player in the post-season in this decade, suffered a nervous breakdown in their pitching in this playoff, coughing up forty-seven Red Sox runs, and fired the manager, Mike Hargrove, when it was over.

Martínez—a slight, mild-looking Dominican, with sloping shoulders—whipped the Yankees, 13–1, up in Fenway Park, giving up two hits over his seven innings: their only loss of the Championships and the autumn. The win was a comedown, even in Boston, since the game had been billed (and heavily scalped) as an epic faceoff between the incumbent Sox ace and the old one, the perfidious Roger Clemens, who jumped ship in 1997. Roger departed the game in the third inning, down by four runs, to heavy booing—the loudest, perhaps, from patrons who had paid twelve hundred dollars for four seats at the not-so-classic meeting. I was at Shea, for the Braves, that day, but I doubt that the Yankees, who managed two hits in Pedro's seven innings, were surprised. The last time they had seen him, at the Stadium on September 10th, he had fanned seventeen—the most Yankees to strike out in a game in the history of the franchise. That night, a band of guerrilla Sox fans took up a front-row position in the deep left-field upper deck, where they began posting a defiant row of Pedro's strikeouts. The insurgents were dislodged at last in the sixth, when a commando force in Yankee regalia ripped down the display and sent it flying—a little storm of "K"s fluttering in tribute as they fell.

Martínez throws a fastball in the middle-to-high-ninety-m.p.h. range, a cut fastball (it's held off center, to impart a late dart or bend), a curve, and a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changeup, and delivers each with burning intelligence and intent. He has long, Koufax-like fingers, which bend upward at an almost grotesque angle as the pitch is delivered. Martínez's back was still killing him in the Clemens game, but when it was over he said to the reporters, "If you were the one hurting like I am hurting, you won't be pitching unless you have the heart like I do or you are me. . . . I am going to do it again, and I am going to try to do it again, and whatever I have I am going to take out there, and if I tell you that, I mean that by fact." He is, by fact, the great pitcher of our day—he is expected to win both the Cy Young and the Most Valuable Player awards in the American League this year—and he's a gift or reward of some sort for old fans who sometimes turn their gaze away long before the latest home run has begun to bend in its arc and, duh, come back down again.

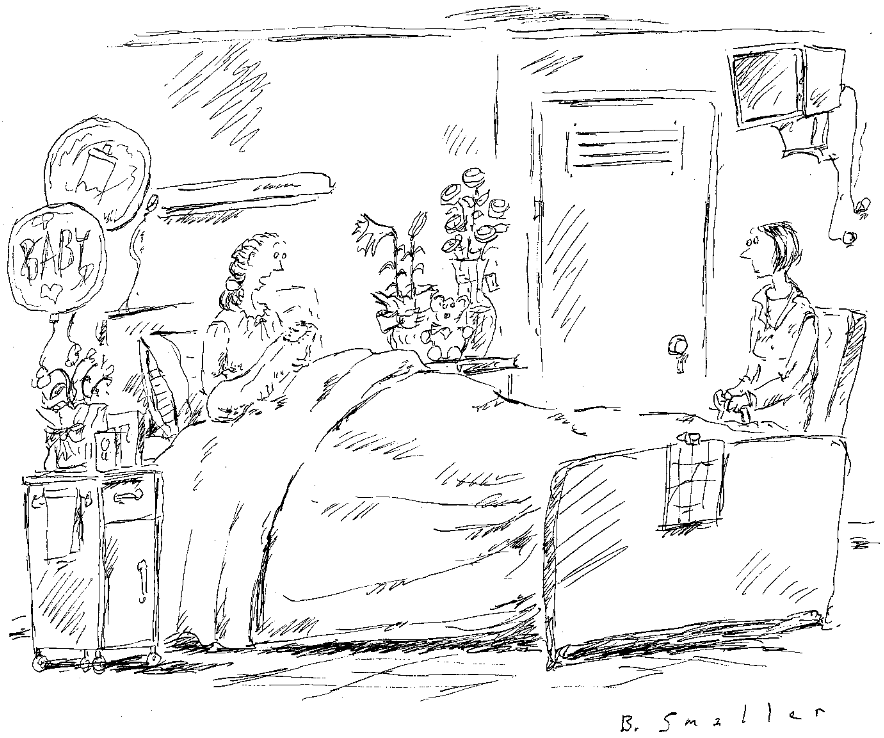
The introductions of Major League Baseball's All-Century Team on the brightly lighted field in Atlanta before the second game of the World Series were affecting, but the ovation and sustained applause for Pete Rose was news. Pete, raising his scarlet Reds cap and turning his thick, familiar face upward toward his vehement supporters, drew more attention than Babe Ruth or Lou Gehrig or Jackie Robinson when those names were announced, and more than Sandy Koufax or Willie Mays or Yogi Berra or, say, Mark McGwire, who were up on the mid-diamond dais in company with the fourteen other living electees. Rose, of course, has been absent from the game since 1989, when he signed an agreement to a lifetime banishment from the sport because of his gambling on ballgames. His reappearance on the MasterCard fan ballots, which circulated all summer, and his presence here at Turner Field were at the sufferance of Commissioner Bud Selig, who had decided it would be unfair to keep Pete away, just this once.

Rose was the only man on the platform who could be said to be working, and he did himself some more good a bit later, when Jim Gray, a field interviewer for NBC Sports, pressed him vehemently in a pre-game one-on-one, wanting to know if he was "willing to show contrition, admit that you bet on baseball, and make some sort of apology." Pete, who has never admitted to the gambling charges, in spite of a detailed and devastating body of evidence against him, seemed genuinely startled at Gray's invitation to step into the confessional. "I'm surprised you're bombarding me like this," he said. "This is a prosecutor's brief, not an interview." The earnest and pale-faced Gray wouldn't drop it, and the interview lit up telephone call-boards at talk shows and NBC stations all around the country that evening, as indignant fans weighed in on behalf of Charlie Hustle.

Being at the park, I caught this Q. and A. only in replay, and, while I felt that Jim Gray might have shifted ground once he saw that Pete wasn't going to do a Jimmy Swaggart for us, I shared his apparent wish to grab Pete by the throat (figuratively—a *little* figuratively) and shake a morsel of candor out of him about the moldering aspersion. It isn't about to happen. Rose, an inveterate card-show and call-in-radio Dreyfus, has stiffed the nation on this issue for a decade, as he did when he refused the late Commissioner Bart Giamatti's repeated invitations to defend himself in an open hearing. He claims never to have seen the published evidence—pages of betting logs in his handwriting, including bets on his own team, and records of phone calls from bookies to the clubhouse (he was the manager) at the Reds' Riverfront Stadium. These could be produced and tested in court, were Rose ever to mount an attempt to clear his name. But this is not Pete's way. He has become Nixonian, clothed in humility and splendor as he barges down Denial. He is Shoeless Joe coming out of the cornfield in "Field of Dreams," and America loves him for it.

What Rose is campaigning for isn't exoneration but admission to the Hall of Fame, from which he was officially debarred by the commissioner's office as part of his exile. Were the gate to be lifted, Pete would pop into the temple in an instant—for his four thousand two hundred and fifty-six hits, his thirty-five hundred games played and fourteen thousand at-bats (the most for any player, all of them), and his vividly remembered style of play, which showed us how a player with limited abilities could make it all the way, just on desire. Fans, in any case, are all for this outcome—every poll shows it, by a wide margin—but Commissioner Selig remains obdurate: no reconsideration will be offered, nothing has changed in the landscape.

I had seen Jim Gray across the room at the jam-packed Pete Rose press conference staged by Major League Baseball an hour or so before the field ceremonies. Pete, his oddly orange hair



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[1] CNN Financial Network, June 9, 1999, "Young, Savvy and Wired."

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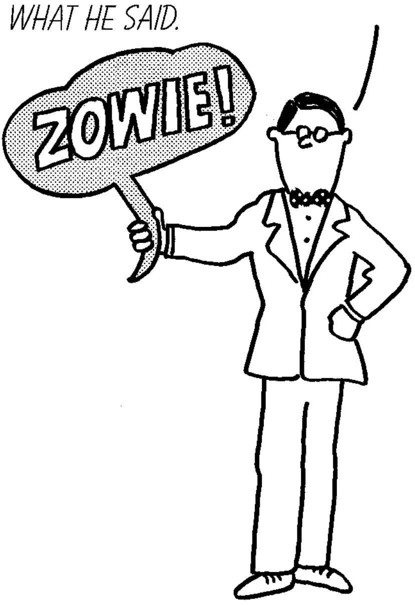

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shining in the lights, was cheerful and unconscionable, addressing old writer friends and columnists by name, and scanning the house (which included some strong supporters of his) to see how he was getting over. He was sorry about the whole thing, he told us—or said, rather, that he would do "anything in my power to change what has happened to me in the last ten years." He told us he had never met Bud Selig but that he might arm-wrestle him when he did. He evoked Bart Giamatti—"Wouldn't it be nice if Bart could be here tonight?"—and said he believed that Bart would have given him a second chance. He wondered about the ovation he would perhaps receive here tonight—would it last as long as the cheers and applause he got in Cincinnati the night he broke Ty Cobb's record? He was a teacher, he told us, and knew what was required to help a team that was down. "It's tough to turn an attitude around," he said.

Baffled, I stuck my own hand up at last and asked how his plaque at Cooperstown might read, should he be reinstated and admitted to the Hall.

"Well, first of all it would be as long as this table here," Rose said, and reminded us that he had played on the winning team more often than anybody in the history of sports. "When I went to the ballpark, I thought I was going to win."

Not what I'd meant, as we both knew.

Part of me, the Jim Gray part, believes, against all odds, that Pete Rose will get into the Hall—on the Commissioner's terms, not his. If he does, the line "Suspended from baseball in 1989 for betting on games; reinstated 20—" won't take up all that much room on the crowded, ringing bronze. Do it, Pete, and we will come.

GAME ONE, played on the previous night, amid frigid breezes, had got itself over with in a hurry, like a football game, with the home team and its bundled-up tomahawkers perhaps aware of a deeper chill near the end. Ahead 1–0 in the seventh, thanks to a solo homer by Chipper Jones, the Braves appreciated the brusque ground-ball outs being thrown by their old grandmaster, Greg Maddux, and, more objectively, a rush of strikeouts by the high-bending, electric Yankee starter, Orlando Hernández. Scott Brosius led off the eighth for the Yankees with a

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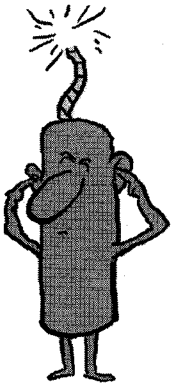
dinky single through the left side, and Darryl Strawberry, pinch-hitting, walked on a very close inside pitch—c'mon, ump! Chuck Knoblauch now laid down the expected bunt, a little darter that found its way past the mound and somehow out of the grasp of first baseman Brian Hunter. Bases loaded. Derek Jeter singled, tying the score. Paul O'Neill, facing Rocker, ran the count to 3–1 and singled to right, for two more, and a walk to Jim Leyritz delivered another. Almost silently, the Yanks had batted around.

"So many close pitches," said manager Bobby Cox afterward, shaking his head gloomily.

"Maddux got us out and got us out and got us out," said Joe Torre. "Then there was a little break and . . . we took advantage." He was nearly apologetic about it.

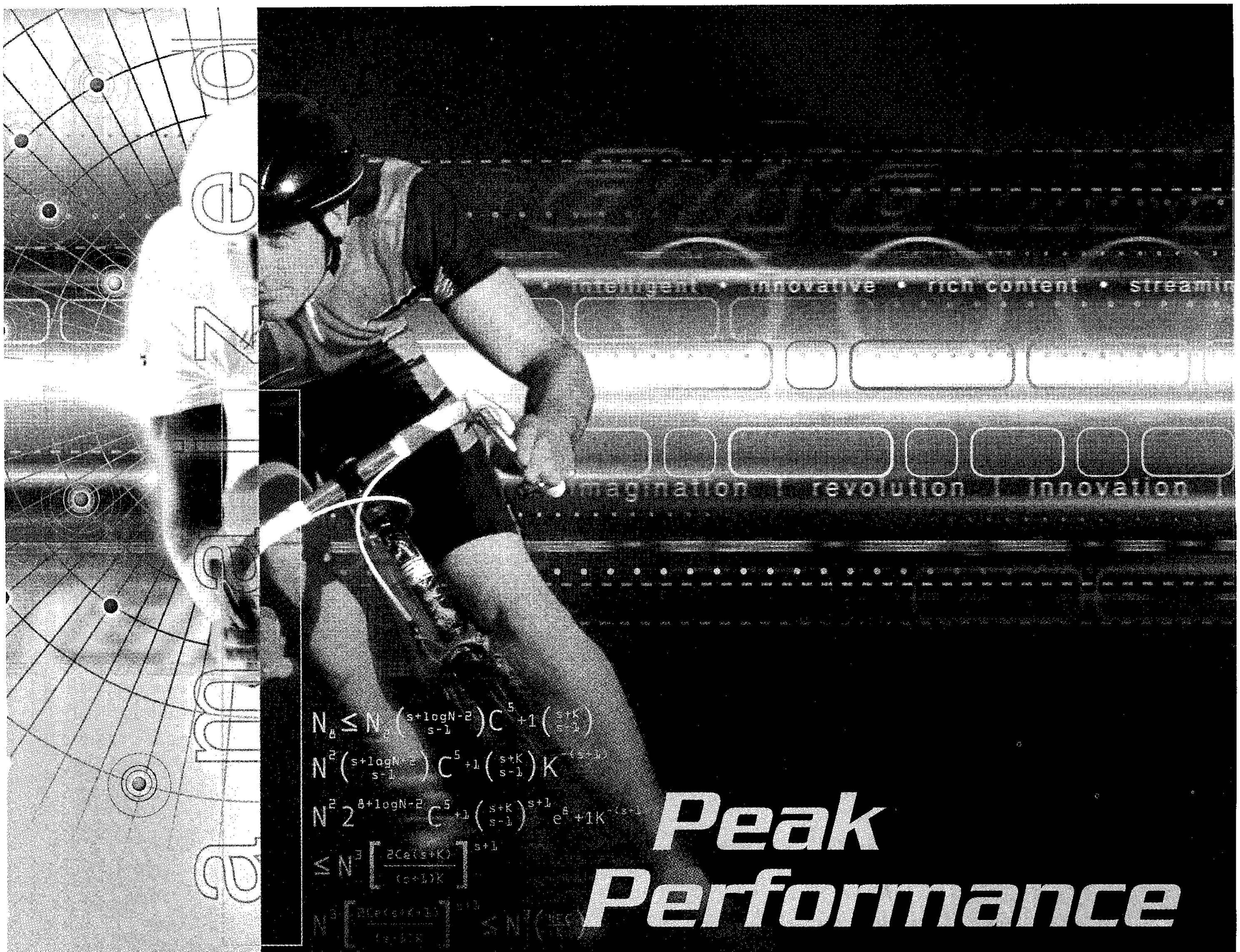
Bob Gibson, the great Cardinal fireballer, was in the visiting manager's office (he and Torre were teammates and pals on the Cardinals in the seventies), where we watched Hernández, by television, taking questions in the interview room. Still combative, El Duque went on volubly in Spanish about the homer he had given up to Chipper, the only hit he surrendered in his seven innings. "What he's saying," Gibson explained, "is shit happens."



The Braves played poorly the next night, embarrassing themselves in front of the centennial old-timers. David Cone, strong after a nine-day rest, looked startled by the tremendous movement on his pitches, like a man with a fox terrier on the end of the leash, while the persistent Yankee batters showed their abiding fondness for the two-strike single and the tacked-on, two-out run. With the Braves behind by three runs in the first inning and seven-zip by the fifth—it was 7–2 at the end—writers in the press box had begun playing computer solitaire on their screens. Aware of booings in the stands here and there, the Turner Field organist offered up the shopworn war chant, inflaming a hope now dependent upon the occasional base on balls, and the thinning hometown ranks moaned and woo-wooed still again, waggling their red rubber toys.

Removed northward, the games took on the speeded-up, cascading effect that attends a sweep—or did so, rather, after the Braves ran up an early 5–1 lead against Andy Pettitte in Game Three and watched it taken down, brick by brick, as the Yankees caught up and won, 6–5, with four home runs. The champions had so far maintained a dutiful, old-pro solemnity as they went about their business, but when Chuck Knoblauch struck the tying two-run homer to short right field in the eighth, just in over Brian Jordan's stretching leap, joy and pummelling became O.K. again. For the Yanks, this was the dinger of the year, given Knoblauch's excruciating recent struggles to make the routine throw to first from his second-base position. This psychological kink resurfaces in baseball like a cold sore. The Dodger second baseman Steve Sax suffered through it in the mid-eighties—it became known as "the Sax thing" around the league—and so did a Mets catcher, Mackey Sasser, who sometimes could barely return the ball to the mound after a pitch. Knoblauch, who is five feet nine, is a highly competent nine-year veteran, with a fashionably dyed, boyish brush-cut, but this year baseball went sour for him. He made twenty-six errors, often on routine plays or throws, and his peg became an awkward-looking sidearm lob; now and then you could see him watching his *hand* while he threw. He had grown more confident at the plate in recent days—he was killing the ball, in fact—but still wore a hunched, elderly look afield. Now all that was over, and Knoblauch could be young again.

The game had stopped being scary once Mariano Rivera, the closer de luxe, was in there—he had not allowed an earned run in thirty-nine and two-thirds innings, going back to July 21st—and the Yankee bleacher creatures laid down a wintry underground sostenuto interspersed with anvil clanks and those explosive two-note cries "Pau-LEE!" . . . "Pau-LEE!" They were almost merciful with the Braves, whom they had famously baited and startled in the 1996 finale. The evening had one more celebration in it. Chad Curtis, a part-time left fielder, had delivered the first of the Yankee homers, a solo shot against Tom Glavine, back in the fifth, and when he stepped in again in the tenth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George Steinbrenner, leaning on a railing directly behind my perch in the auxiliary press box, muttered, "Curtis, you couldn't hit two home runs in a game, could you?" Curtis could.

The Braves, down by three games and plucking the coverlet, had already become the subject of fervent pre-autopsies. An insufficient bench, a weakness at shortstop, and a general debility brought about by the absence of their splendid first baseman, Andres Galarraga (who missed the season after being diagnosed with lymphatic cancer), and catcher Javier Lopez (who had knee surgery in late July) were commonly cited, but the spooky calm that afflicted the Braves dugout in these late games, where often the only movement was the Dippy-bird bowings of pitching coach Leo Mazzone, was in pure response to the Yankee hitters. In beating or dismissing the celebrated Atlanta starters—including Maddux, Glavine, and John Smoltz (loser of the fourth game), who have together compiled a Napoleonic five hundred and sixty-five victories and seven Cy Young Awards—the Yankee batting order imposed an implacable, constricting presence in these games. The batters differed in mannerism—Chuck Knoblauch's top hand almost lifting from the bat before each delivery, Paul O'Neill slashing air between pitches, and Bernie Williams sinking into that broken-tripod stance, and so forth—but their group message was clear: no hurry here; wait; let this pitch go; step out; watch; try to foul this one off; wait, *now!* "They attack the pitcher with the same plan, no matter who's there," Smoltz said after the Series.

Atlanta suffered no end of bad luck in these games, as losing clubs often do, but their worst stroke was just coming up: Roger Clemens, waiting here in the unaccustomed role of a No. 4 starter. The Rocket had struggled through the year, the victim of various injuries and an apparent unwillingness to throw anything less than perfect pitches. He had maintained an uncomplaining, monumental stillness in spite of a 14–10 record and 4.60 earned-run average—not the kind of season that the Yankees had expected when they traded away David Wells for an eight-and-a-half-million-dollar, five-time Cy Young Award winner. But Clemens, I had noticed, was looking looser and more cheerful as the post-season went on. He had been touched to find himself up on the platform with the other centurions in Atlanta (he wore a snazzy new pin-striped suit: the Yankee uniform in negative), and a couple of days later he was funny and charming in the interview room, talking about himself and Ted Williams in spring-training days, long ago. He was geared for a Series win and a championship ring at last—both had eluded him—and when the game began he appeared to rush through his innings in a fever of excitement and split-finger strikeouts. His opposite number, John Smoltz, was almost his equal on this day, striking out eleven in his seven innings, but the Yankees, back to their singles style again, brought in three runs in the third, with the main damage coming from a low screamer by Tino Martinez that deflected sharply off first baseman Ryan Klesko's arm—that sudden crazing of the mirror (*"OH!"*) which changes the face of a game. Scott Brosius made a remarkable play in the sixth, and so did Derek Jeter, just before him—a sprinting, reaching grab of a ball to his left that he took with his body still somehow facing first base, with the muscled throw coming almost sidearm. He finished the play running backward, slowing down in balletic, dancing fashion, with his look of engaged, slightly smiling pleasure taking in what he had just done. The Yankees won, 4–1.

The celebrations were different, with the Yankees, abandoning the customary pig pile, gathering beyond the mound and lingering there for long minutes, with their arms around each other, while they exchanged embraces and exclamations within the circle. A little later on, Clemens appeared on the top of the Yankee dugout, and ran excitedly down its length, low-fiving everybody in reach. This has been an emotional year for the Yankees, what with Joe Torre's operation for prostate cancer and two-month period of recovery, and Darryl Strawberry's September return from his own cancer operation, a year ago, and a suspension for a drug infringement in the spring, and the deaths of Joe DiMaggio and Catfish Hunter. Paul O'Neill had played in this final game in spite of the death of his father the night before; Scott Brosius and Luis Sojo had also lost their fathers during the season. Much has been made of this trial by misfortune, which I bring up once again only to deflect suggestion that any of this was character-building or constituted a maturing for these athletes. The Yankees, from Joe Torre on down, were grownups all the time, I mean, and this satisfying quality may be what I have most admired about them: twenty-five men playing a boys' game with an absolute appreciation of its difficulties, and with confidence in their own capabilities to make it come out right most of the time. As Roger Clemens put it, "It's enjoyable playing with these guys and watching how they go to work." ♦

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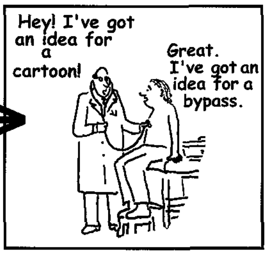
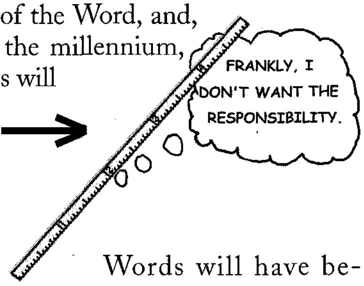
THE ONE-PAGE CARTOON COURSE

BY ROBERT MANKOFF

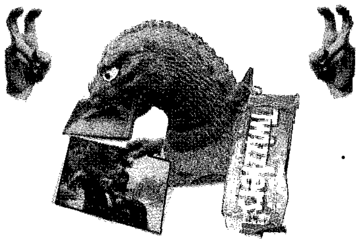
WHEN I became cartoon editor, I got so excited I developed an arrhythmia. The cardiologist who examined me got pretty excited, too.


Hey! I've got an idea for a cartoon!
Great. I've got an idea for a bypass.

These days, it seems, everybody wants to be a cartoonist. Why? Probably because people understand that a transition is taking place from the Word to the Image—that the end is nigh for the primacy of the Word, and, come the millennium, images will


FRANKLY, I DON'T WANT THE RESPONSIBILITY.

Words will have become completely obsolete. Or, to quote Bran Ferren, the brilliant Disney Imagineer,

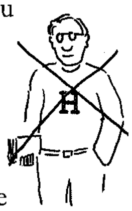


Doesn't make any sense to you? Don't worry. Come the millennium, Bran assures me, it will. And, if not this millennium, then definitely the one after that.

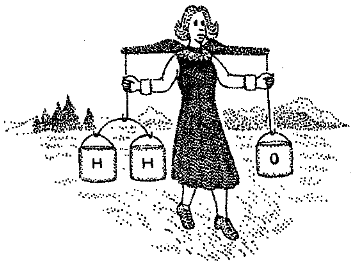
But, to catch the wave of the future now, just follow the simple rules on this page. They're made to be broken, but not often, and only by a licensed humorist.

My advice is to master them, and if you're not a hundred-per-cent satisfied with the results, well, then, try seventy-five per cent.

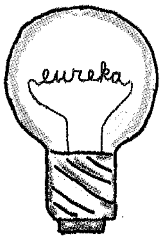
- Rule One: Get an education but not too good an education. You should learn just enough about the world to make fun of it, but no more. It'll only depress you.



Think about it: How much chemistry did I have to know to do this cartoon?



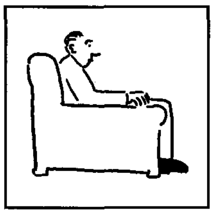
- Rule Two: Don't submit just one idea. You're thinking, Humor Breakthrough, and you're in line for the Nobel Prize in Cartooning, but to an editor it looks like the only idea you ever had.



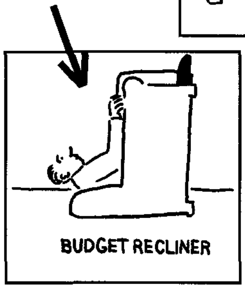
Instead, submit ten ideas. Why ten? Because nine out of ten things in life don't work out. That's why you do ten things.

- Rule Three: It's not the ink, it's the think.

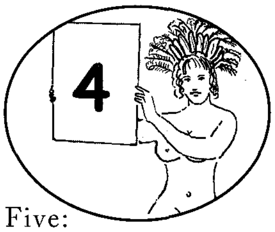
To make this cartoon work, I don't need a better drawing—I need a better idea. Indeed, any idea.



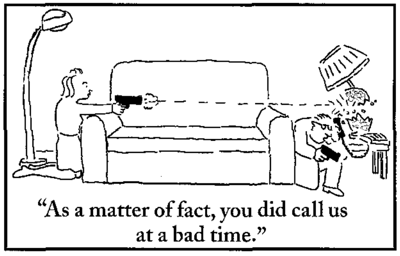
Like this:



- Rule Four: A little sex never hurts.



- Rule Five: The classic gag cartoon must create an unbearable tension between drawing and caption. A tension that can be dealt with only by a sudden release of stress at the epicenter of consciousness, or, if you're Bran Ferren, at Epcot Center.



"As a matter of fact, you did call us at a bad time."

How did I know that would make you laugh? Well, I'm actually a licensed humorist. And therefore I know that the most important rule of all is

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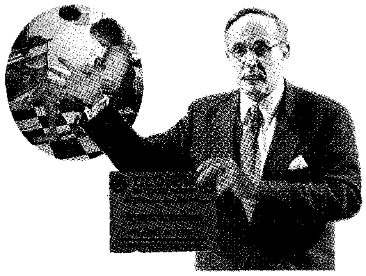
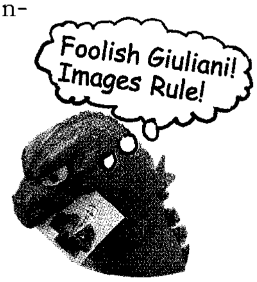
- Rule Six: The element of surprise.



"You want a surprise, buddy? I caught this so-called editor cartooning in the nude. I'm revoking his humor license and shutting this page down. Furthermore, all copies of this magazine are hereby confiscated and are to be returned to the building formerly known as the Brooklyn Museum." ♦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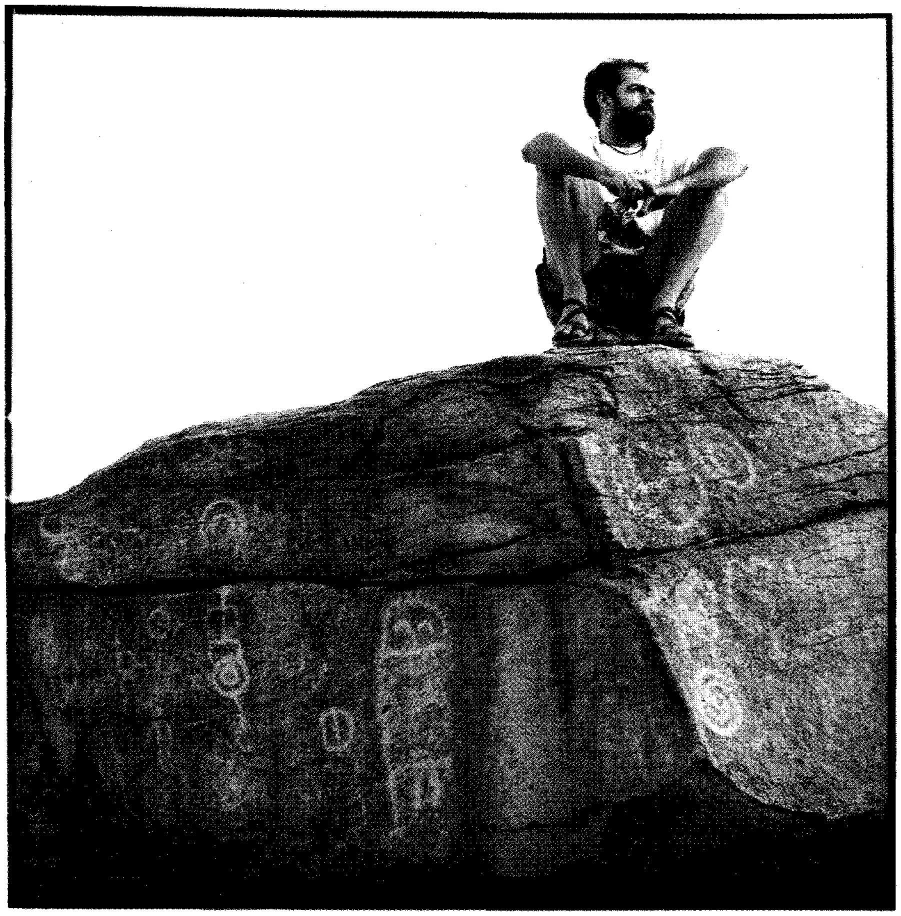

TIMOTHY ARCHIBALD

Kierán Suckling (above) wants "to change society, and he believes the environment is the way to do it," one critic says.

OUR FAR-FLUNG CORRESPONDENTS

NO PEOPLE ALLOWED

A radical environmental group attempts to return the Southwest to the wild.

BY NICHOLAS LEMANN

IN April of 1998, to celebrate his early retirement as a mail carrier for the United States Postal Service, Richard Humphrey took his family on a camping trip. The Humphreys loaded up the car—husband, wife, two daughters, two dogs, tent, food, a rifle so that Humphrey could teach the girls to shoot, books for home schooling—and drove up into the Apache National Forest, north of Tucson, near the Arizona-New Mexico border. They found a campsite, put their tent up, and went to bed. The next morning, Humphrey got up early to cut some firewood. Not far from the tent, he saw an animal that looked like an underfed, wrong-colored German shepherd: a Mexican gray wolf.

Richard Humphrey is the kind of rough-hewn, matter-of-fact guy whose official persona doesn't leave room for fear, but that morning he was afraid. A wolf is an almost primal sight. Humphrey ran back to the tent, woke his family, and loaded the rifle. Through an endless morning, the wolf, which was soon joined by its mate, circled the tent while Humphrey shouted and threw rocks, hoping to scare them away. That didn't work. After a while, he gave up and went back into the tent to start his daughters' lessons.

Soon afterward, his wife, who had gone outside, shouted, "Dick! Come! Get the rifle!" Humphrey heard a rustling noise and saw one of the wolves running up a hill. Then he turned around, and saw the other wolf come out from behind a tree. He shot it dead. A moment later, one of his dogs limped up, bleeding; it had been attacked.

Last spring, a year after Humphrey killed the wolf, an organization called the Center for Biological Diversity took out a full-page ad in the New York *Times*. In a black banner across the top was an adorable photograph of a wolf and the headline "LAST CHANCE FOR SOUTHWEST WOLVES AND WILDERNESS." The ad laid out this story: the United States Bureau of Fish and Wildlife released eleven Mexican gray wolves that had been raised in American zoos. The wolves had been in the Apache Forest for only a few weeks, and now they were being subjected to a "wild wolf massacre," probably conducted "by saboteurs leaning out of pickup trucks."

A hundred years ago or so, wolves were arguably the lords of this patch of American territory, and humans the interlopers. Today, it's the wolves that are encroaching on human prerogatives, such as raising cattle, which wolves prey upon. No wonder people like Richard Humphrey regard them as hostile and threatening. Since the Humphrey incident, five more of the reintroduced Mexican gray wolves have been killed: four were shot, and one was run over while crossing a highway. Two more wolves are missing and three have died of a virus; all in all, the wolves are batting .500 on survival. On the other side of the ledger, the wolves have killed three head of cattle, and tussled with several others and a few dogs besides Richard Humphrey's.

The Center for Biological Diversity has demanded that Humphrey be prosecuted. Under the boldface heading "PROSECUTE THE KILLERS," its Web site states, "The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has sent a signal that killing wolves is not a serious crime. Humphrey initially reported that he shot the wolf because it attacked his dog. This is not a legally sufficient reason to kill an endangered species." When I talked over the question of campers and wolves with the center's executive director, Kierán Suckling, he told me, "Wilderness doesn't

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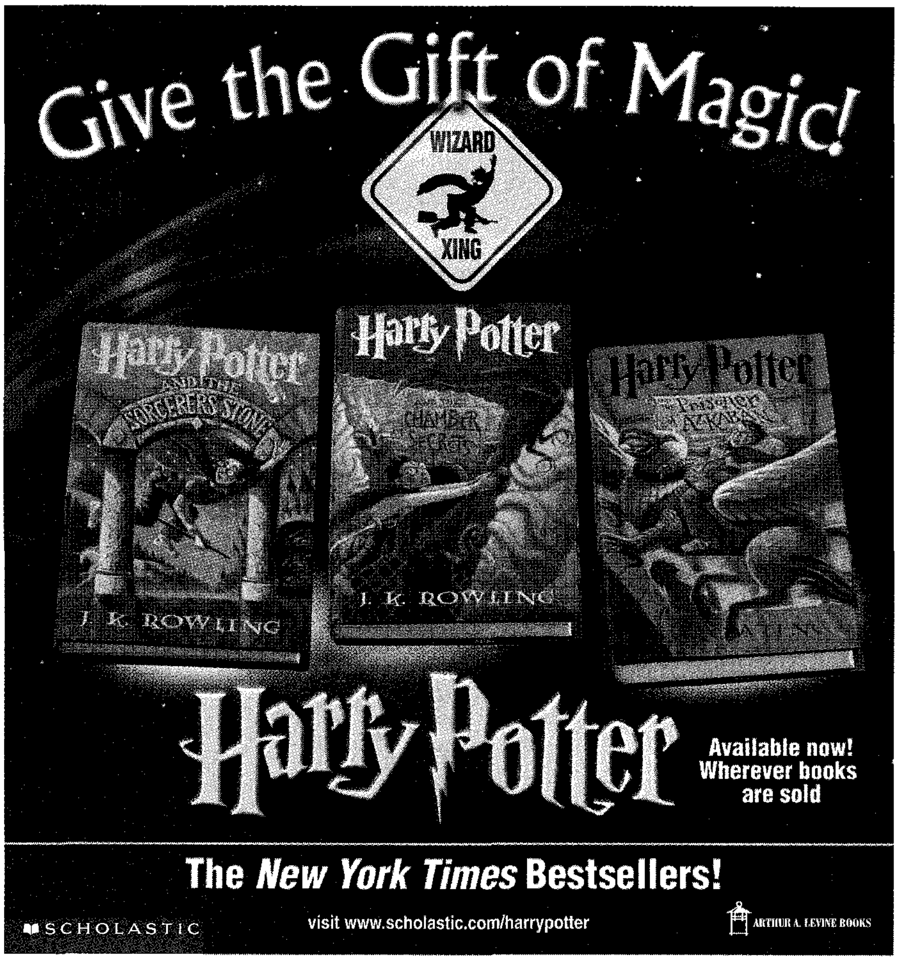

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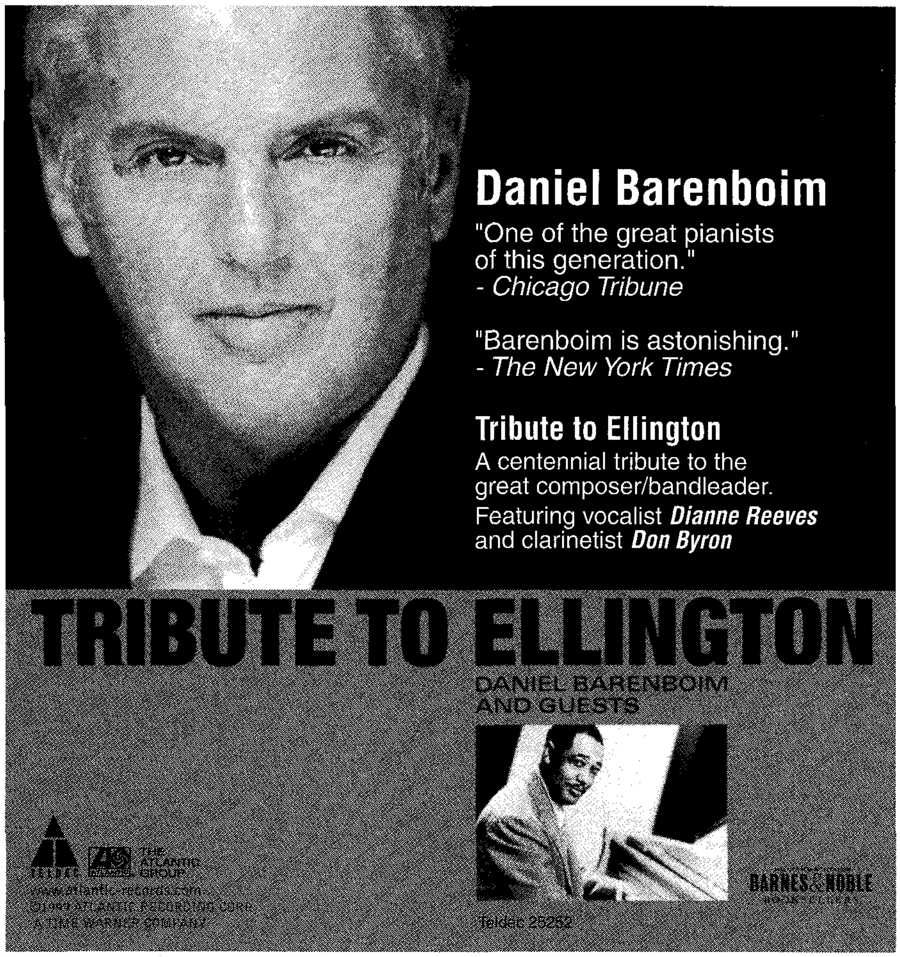

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just mean living with bunny rabbits. It means living with dangerous animals."

THE confrontation between Humphrey and the wolf was a small skirmish in a larger conflict that is going on in the Southwest—a war between a group of people who imagine themselves to be living in the movie version of the West, in which man wrests sustenance from the magnificent but unforgiving land, and a group of people who imagine themselves to be the authentic tribunes of wild nature, restoring mountains and rivers, plants and animals to their rightful, primary position in the order of things.

Kierán Suckling—trickster, philosopher, publicity hound, master strategist, and unapologetic pain in the ass—is the most visible member of the latter group. The Center for Biological Diversity, founded ten years ago, has become the most important radical environmental group in the country and a major force in the life of Arizona and New Mexico. What's unusual about the center is not so much its agenda, which is shared by the rest of the so-called deep-ecology wing of the environmental movement, as its effectiveness.

In 1995, it persuaded a federal judge to enjoin, for more than a year, all commercial forestry in the United States Forest Service's Region 3 (Arizona, New Mexico, and parts of Texas—eleven national forests in all) and in the entire Navajo Indian Nation. The injunction dealt what will probably be a mortal blow to commercial logging in the Southwest. Eleven sawmills in Arizona and New Mexico, including all but one of the biggest, have been closed since 1992, and Suckling is hardly exaggerating when he says, "We've basically crushed the timber industry."

Suckling and the two other principal figures at the center, Peter Galvin and Robin Silver, say they don't want to eliminate logging—just logging whose goal is to cut down big trees. Their views about ranching—the center's next target—are less subtle. "You cannot ranch economically in the desert without devastating the ecology," Suckling says. The center has won a series of legal victories that have severely restricted cattle grazing. Ranchers have started a whole range of organizations—belligerent, combative ones and kind, gentle ones devoted to "conflict resolution" and ecological awareness—

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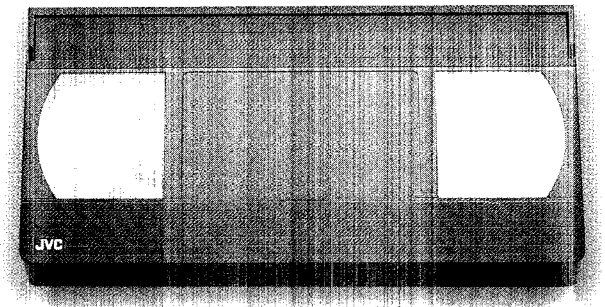

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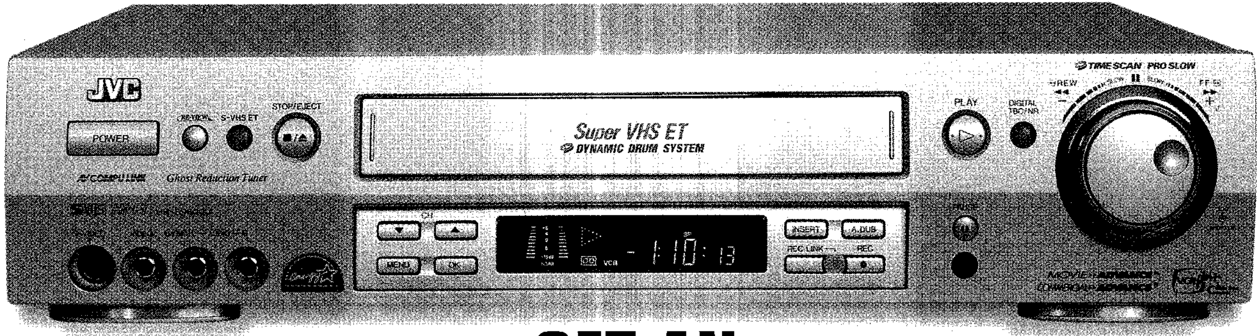
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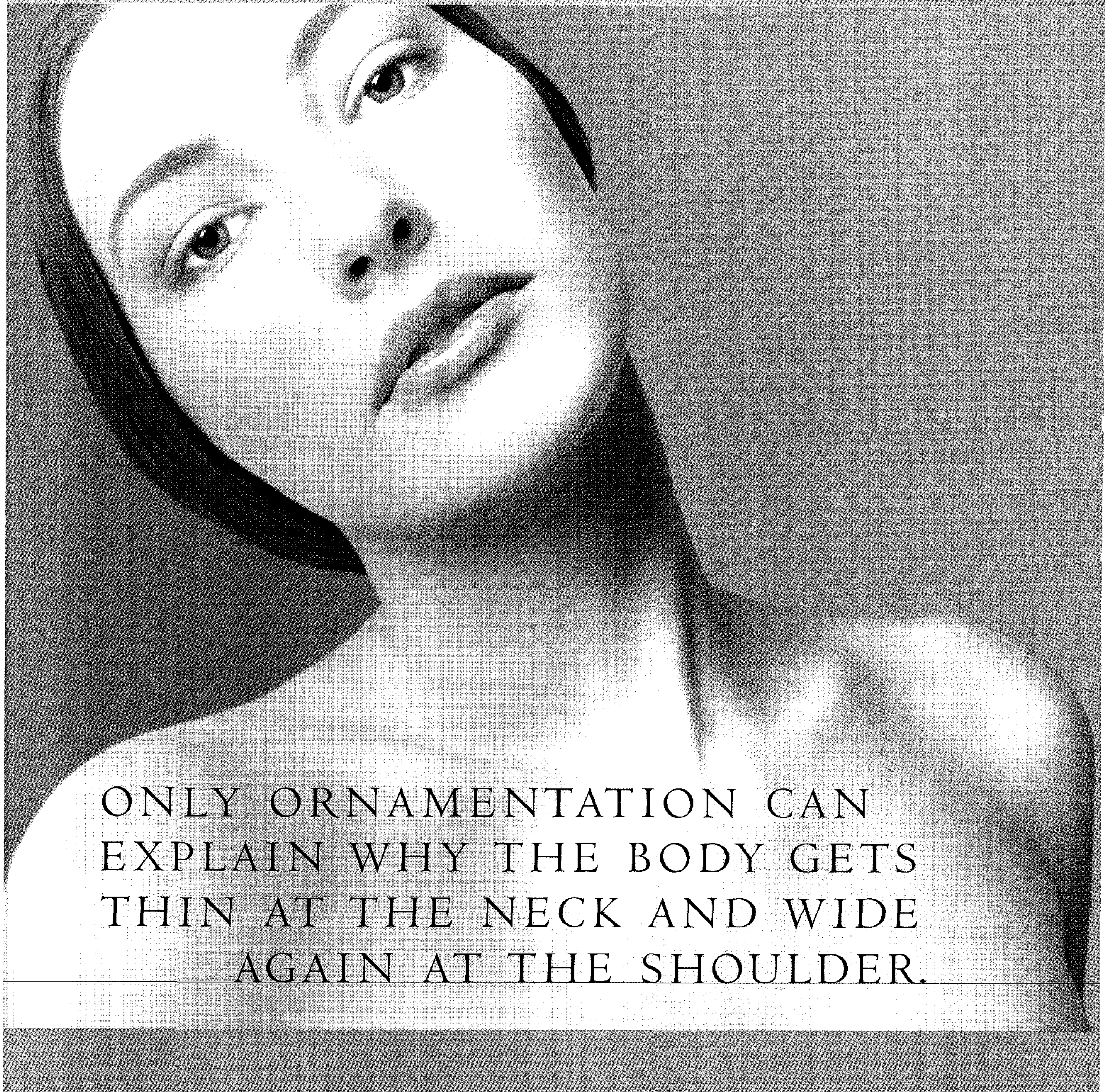

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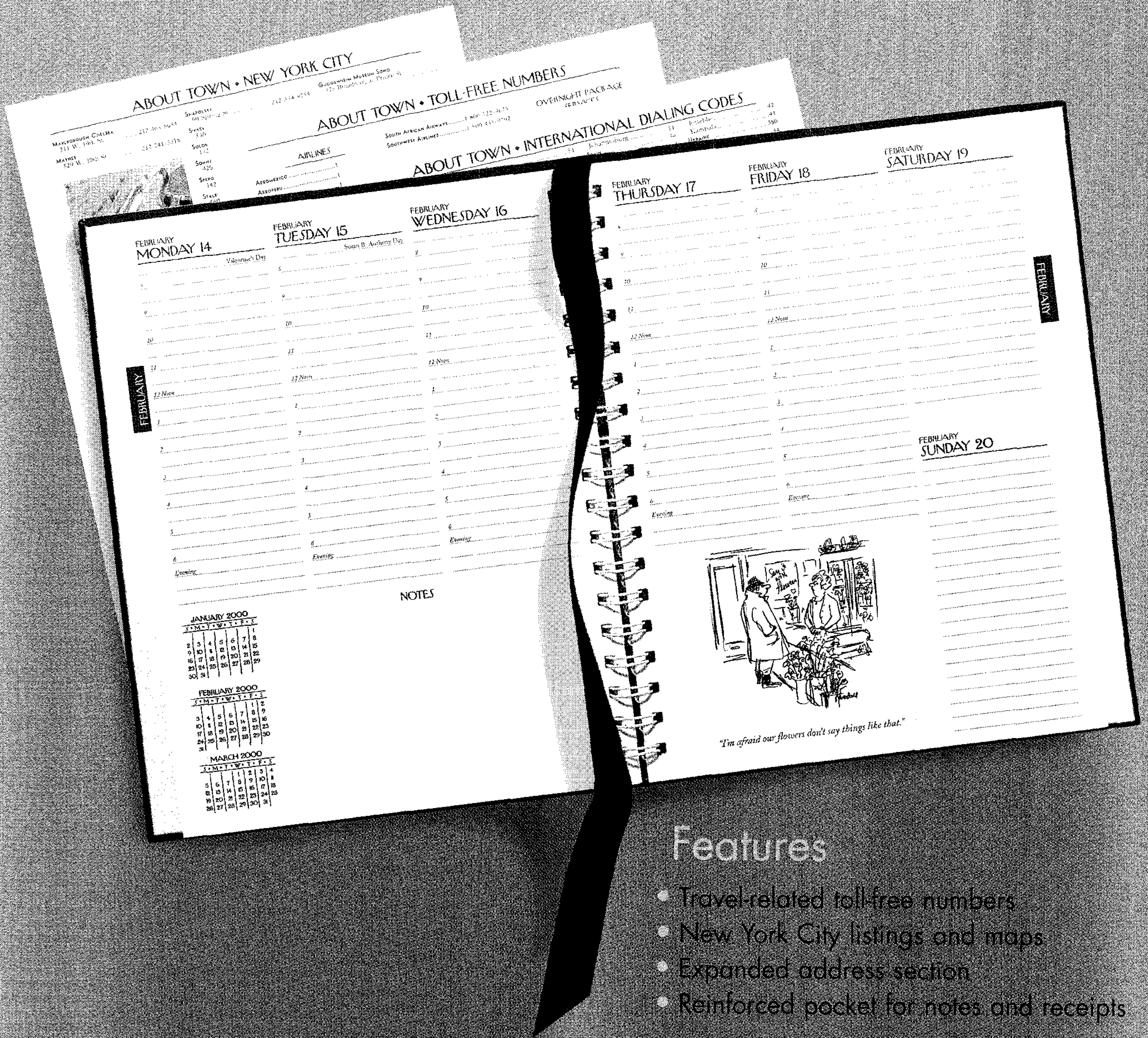
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to protect themselves from the center.

After ranching comes development. The center blocked the construction of a high school in Tucson. It helped force the University of Arizona to scale down severely a state-of-the-art astronomical observatory complex. It is trying to prevent new golf courses from being built in Palm Springs, California, and high-end gated communities in San Diego. It is a prominent member of a coalition of groups whose determined and furious opposition on behalf of several rare-bird species finally caused DreamWorks SKG to abandon plans to build an old-fashioned Hollywood studio complex on one of the last wetlands along the Pacific Ocean in Los Angeles. During the summer, the center won another landmark victory, getting seven hundred and thirty-one thousand acres, including a large portion of the Tucson metropolitan area, put into an environmentally sensitive legal category; as a result, the center will have an easy time challenging almost any building project there grander than a single-family home. And, just last month, a federal judge's ruling effectively stopped the Army Corps of Engineers from granting any sizable development permits in Arizona until it has conducted an elaborate environmental review of streams policy—a review that could take two years to finish.

By now, it isn't just loggers, ranchers, and developers but also many officials in Arizona and New Mexico, and even people in the established, liberal wing of the environmental movement, who don't like the Center for Biological Diversity. Suckling, Galvin, and Silver have been threatened, their offices and homes burgled and vandalized. Once, a government lawyer lost it in a meeting with them and head-butted one of their lawyers.

"They hate the fact that people are coming to the Southwest," says Harold Vangilder, a member of the city council in Sierra Vista, Arizona, and one of the center's many vividly expressive opponents. "They go to the court system because they can't win their agenda with the human race at the voting booth." Bill McDonald, an Arizona rancher whose reputation for environmental sensitivity is large enough to have won him a MacArthur "genius" grant, says, "Kierán Suckling wants to change society, and he believes the environment is the way to do it. When you talk to him about species, his

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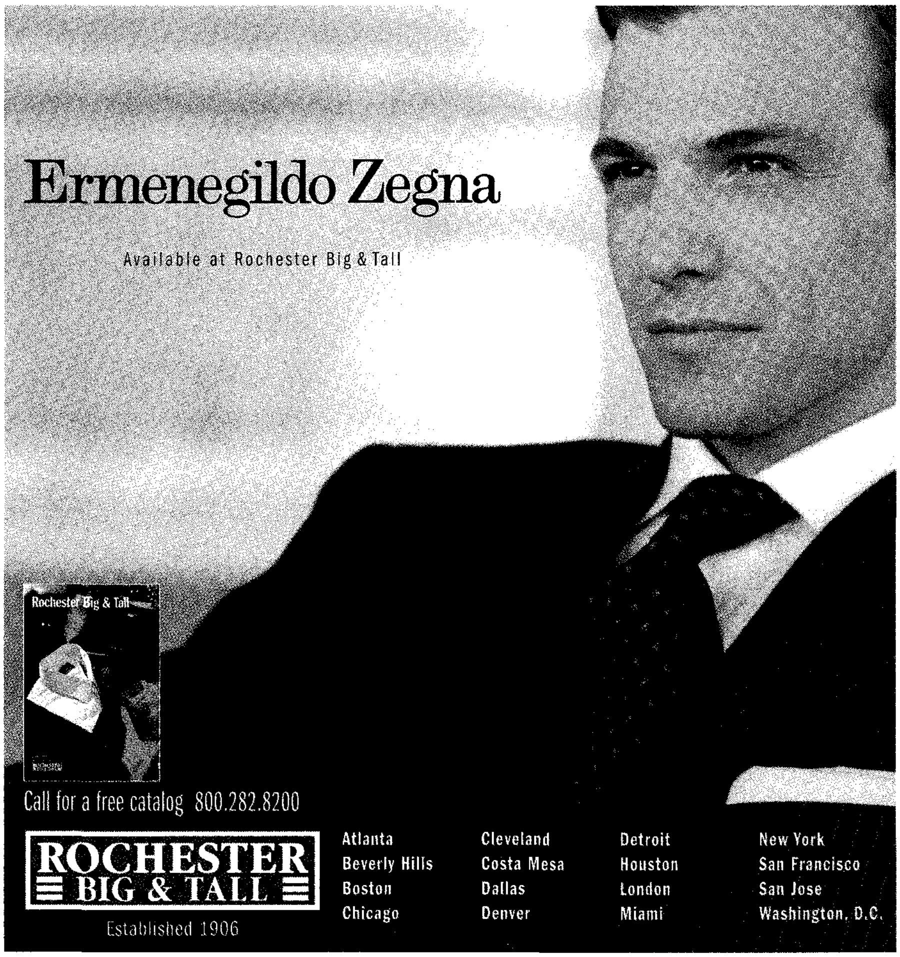

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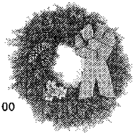

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eyes glaze over. When you talk about changing society, he gets excited." Caren Cowan, the executive secretary of the New Mexico Cattlegrowers' Association, says, "They've put extreme pressure on the ranching industry. Your economy's gonna go. Your families are leaving. They're doing economic genocide to rural counties. And ethnic cleansing of rural residents."

The center's enemies aren't wrong to perceive it as a threat. It acts on behalf of plants and animals (it is now campaigning for the reintroduction of jaguars and grizzly bears), but if it keeps winning the immediate impact will be on people. Settlements would be reduced, structures would be taken down, jobs would be lost. "We will have to inflict severe economic pain," Robin Silver told me. "We'd like to see belly-high grass over millions of acres," Peter Galvin added. "We'd like to close thousands of miles of roads, and see a huge amount of retooling of local economies."

KIERÁN SUCKLING, a slight man in his middle thirties with a goatee, bushy eyebrows, an unruly thatch of hair, and big dark eyes, grew up all over the place; his father was a civil engineer who travelled around the world helping to design enormous industrial building projects. Almost too conveniently for the purposes of this story, the chief psychological theme of his youth was an intense rejection of his father's outlook on life. As Suckling tells it, when he was eight, his previously straitlaced old man came home wearing a leisure suit and driving a Corvette and announced that he was going off to self-actualize. Suckling rarely saw him after that, and refused to speak to him until a couple of years ago.

Before I met Suckling, I asked him to send me something that would give me a feeling for the underpinnings of his brand of environmentalism. A box soon arrived, containing, among other things, "Basic Writings," a collection of Martin Heidegger's essays, and Jacques Derrida's "Margins of Philosophy." Suckling first encountered these texts when he was an undergraduate philosophy major at the College of the Holy Cross, in Worcester, Massachusetts. Heidegger, in an elaborately worked-out way, opposed everything that Suckling's father had stood for: technology, hyper-rationalism, and the whole idea, rooted in Greek philosophy, of man as a benignly logical master of

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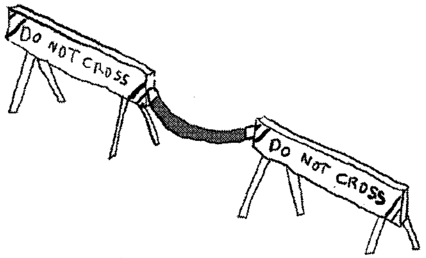
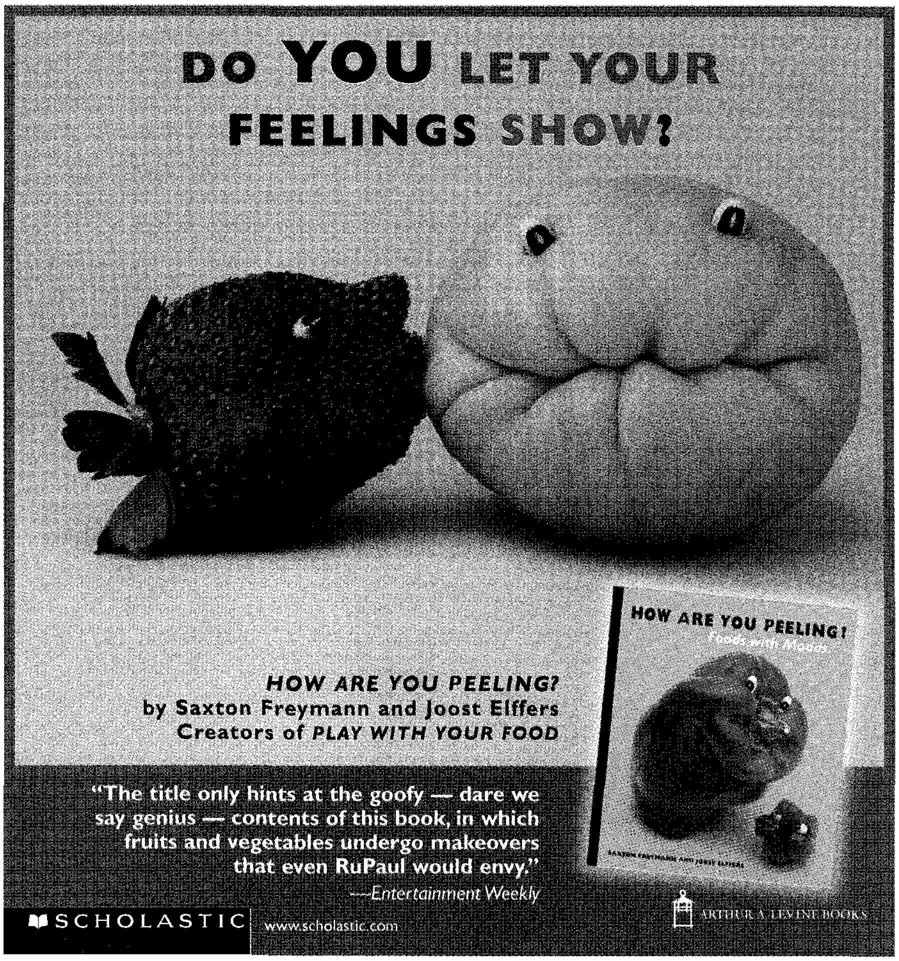
the world. Derrida used Heidegger as a jumping-off point and then went much further, into a complicated, playful examination of the ways in which ideas, social structure, and language are used to enshrine power relations. Lots of radical environmentalists use Heidegger's denunciations of the technological outlook and human supremacy as a premise of their beliefs. Suckling realized that, in addition, to add some fun to the conversation, one could conceive of species in nature in the way that Derrida conceives of words and their meanings—as existing in an endless relational flux, rather than in any natural order of primacy.



After graduating, Suckling moved to Montana. On the way, while camping out in the Badlands National Park, in South Dakota, he had what he described to me as an epiphany. "For the first time in my life, I realized that land is not scenery," he said. "Wilderness is an experience. It's not something you can control. It's like grace, like love—it happens to you. There are large animals there like bison and buffalo. They could kill you. You're not going to get help. So it decenters you. This isn't a stage for humans. It's their stage, too—the plants' and animals'. I'm part of it. It's humbling, but also very wonderful and exciting. I'm part of something bigger."

Suckling spent a couple of years in Missoula, where he supported himself by working for a caterer and got involved with the radical wing of the environmental movement. He then won a fellowship to the University of California at Irvine to study critical theory—one of the most abstract, daring, and recondite fields in academe, made much fun of by outsiders for its impenetrably dense and jargony mode of discourse, but, for the participants, the humanities' equivalent of quantum physics. For Suckling, the move was a big disaster. The city of Irvine and U.C.-Irvine are the closest thing the United States has to Brasília, having been constructed on empty ranchland in the mid-sixties, according to a master plan. "I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felt I'd arrived in Descartes-land," Suckling says, and he left after a day and enrolled in the theory program at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. (Yes, Long Island suburbia seems organic compared with Irvine.)

He stayed at Stony Brook for two years and then, in the summer of 1989, headed west again. In his Montana days, Suckling had joined Earth First!, a group that differentiated itself from mainstream environmental organizations by engaging in direct action; its signature activity was getting members to lie down in front of logging crews or to climb trees so that they couldn't be felled. At one such event in northern New Mexico, Suckling was arrested and spent the night in jail.

During that protest, he met and fell in love with a woman who introduced him to Peter Galvin, a young man his age from Massachusetts who had moved out West to become an environmental activist. They got summer jobs together counting spotted owls in the Gila National Forest, under contract to the United States Forest Service, and set up an encampment on an eighty-acre tract of land outside Reserve, the biggest town in Catron County, New Mexico, on the Arizona border. Catron County is bigger than Connecticut and Rhode Island put together, but fewer than three thousand people live there. It is high, dry country, with peaks above ten thousand feet. Up in the mountains, there are trees, which get larger and lusher as you rise in altitude, but the valleys are wide, scrubby, and dry, and that means that the eye commands great, unimpeded vistas. It's a blank-canvas landscape that gives rise to a certain "Mine, all mine!" feeling, an urge to control land and turn it to your purposes.

Suckling lived in a tepee, Galvin in a cabin nearby, and a constantly changing cast of friends, allies, and lovers moved in and out of the compound. Galvin started an organization called Friends of the Owls, and through that he met Robin Silver, a doctor who worked twelve-hour shifts in an emergency room in Phoenix, and in his off hours went up into the mountains to take nature photographs.

Having formed a loose cadre, the three gave themselves a name—the Greater Gila Biodiversity Project—and began to grope their way toward their tactical breakthrough. Robin Silver's photographs and Galvin and Suckling's nocturnal counts, with other evidence, could be used to make a case that some parts of the Gila National Forest were the habitat of rare species, such as the Mexican spotted owl, the Northern goshawk, and the Southwestern willow flycatcher. As Earth First!ers, Suckling and Galvin had been trained to stop logging by direct action, but one day a friend told Silver, as he remembers it, "We're crazy to sit in trees when there's this incredible law where we can make people do whatever we want."

The "incredible law" is the Endangered Species Act, passed in 1973, at the high-water mark of the environmental movement. Anybody who has evidence that a species is imperilled in a particular habitat—not in danger of total extinction, just in danger in that one place—has the right to petition the Fish and Wildlife Service to declare the species to be endangered. Plants are covered, too. Fish and Wildlife is legally obligated to research every petition it gets. Even if the organization decides not to declare a species in danger, the decision can be challenged in court and overturned. And with every endangered-species designation comes a designation of "critical habitat." (An oddity of the law is that an area can be designated critical habitat for a species even if there are no members of the species living there.) The desert Southwest, because it's so empty, has an enormous diversity of species, and, because it's so dry, species are precarious and need a lot of room to survive.

Suckling, Galvin, and Silver realized that it would be possible to obtain endangered-species designations for dozens of species, whose critical habitat, if put together, would represent a significant portion of the Southwest.

MARISA ACOCELLA

"I want you to meet Dave. You'll get a kick out of his money."

THE center's ideas about the moral superiority of untouched nature to human civilization seem commonplace, but they're actually rather new. According to the standard history of the subject, "Wilderness and the American Mind," by Roderick Nash, nature in its unadulterated form was regarded by humans as frightening, and even evil, up to the mid-eighteenth century. Since then, the celebration of

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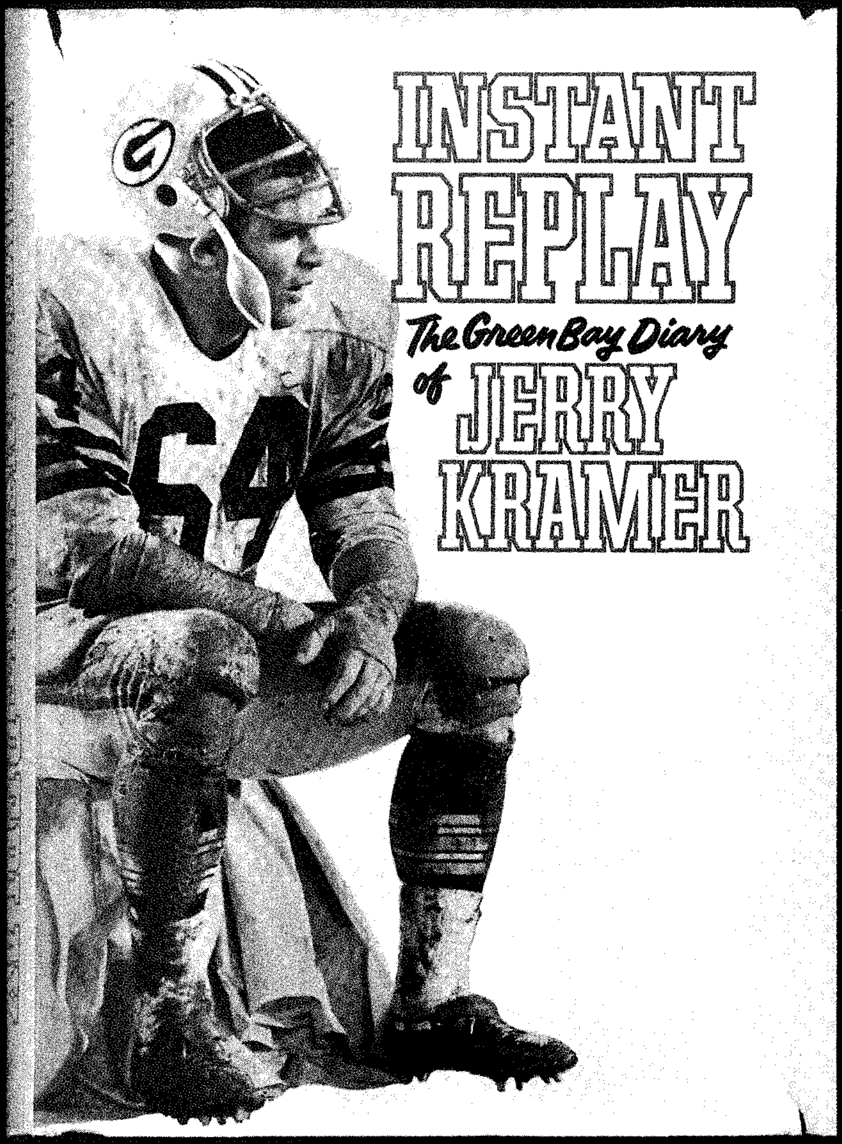
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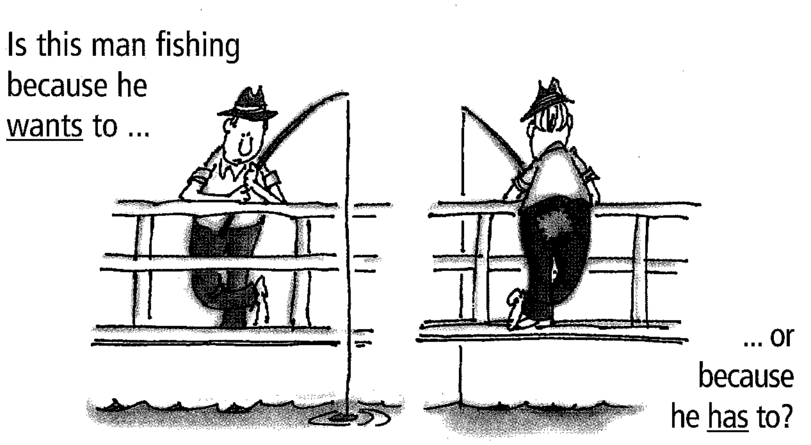

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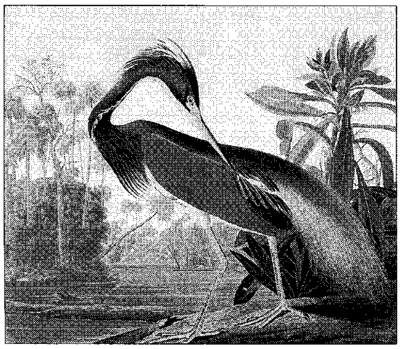

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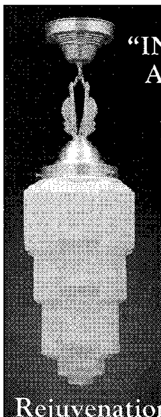

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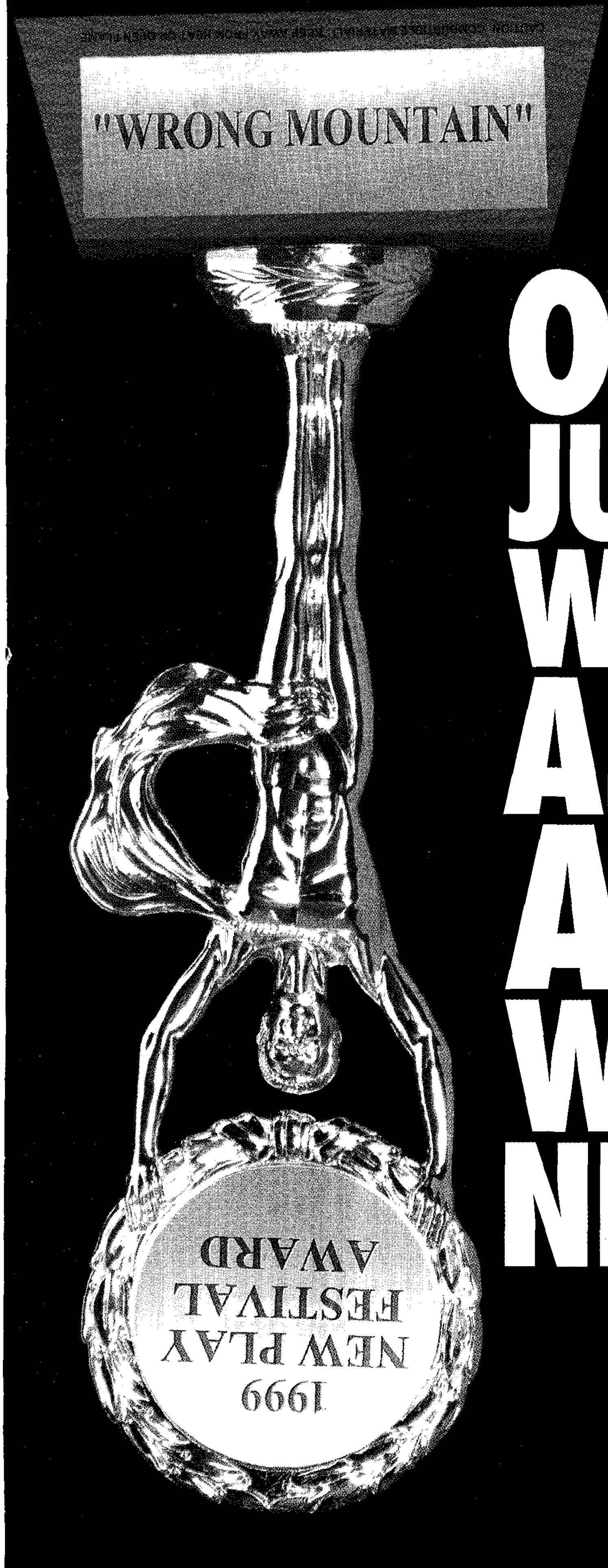
wild nature has had a direct line of descent: Nash says that Henry David Thoreau was the first American thinker to embrace wilderness wholeheartedly. Thoreau lived at Walden Pond on land owned by Ralph Waldo Emerson. Emerson later travelled to Yosemite and met John Muir, the essential early advocate of wilderness in the West. Muir was a friend and, later, a combatant of Gifford Pinchot, the first head of the Forest Service. Pinchot was a friend and, later, a combatant of Aldo Leopold, the apostate forester who helped found the Wilderness Society. One of the world's first designated wilderness areas, created in 1924, in Catron County, was named after Aldo Leopold.

The current system of government control over the West was set up in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A few scenic areas were set aside as national parks, and a series of new federal agencies regulated and managed the land that was being worked for profit: the Forest Service (logging and ranching), the Bureau of Land Management (mining and ranching), and Fish and Wildlife (commercial fishing).

The wilderness idea is profoundly different, because it holds that very large tracts of land should be set aside in an untouched condition, with all commercial activity and all but the hardiest tourists banned. (National wilderness areas, by law, can have no roads.) A further step down the wilderness path is the ideal of biodiversity, in which humans forswear their dominance over the land and over other species. Aldo Leopold's career as a wilderness advocate began with a scene that was a mirror image of the one between Richard Humphrey and the wolf: Leopold, in his youth, encountered a wolf in the Arizona mountains and shot it as a matter of course, but then, "seeing the green fire die" in its eyes, he experienced an overwhelming pang of regret. Afterward, he adopted what he called a "land ethic," which "changes the role of *Homo sapiens* from conqueror of the land-community to plain member and citizen of it." This isn't different in kind from Kierán Suckling's deconstructionist idea of a West in which there would be "a decentering and disempowering of the human"—though Suckling's vision of wilderness as the site for a wondrous interplaying of species, languages, meanings, and myths is more theoretically elaborate than Leopold's. Here, for exam-



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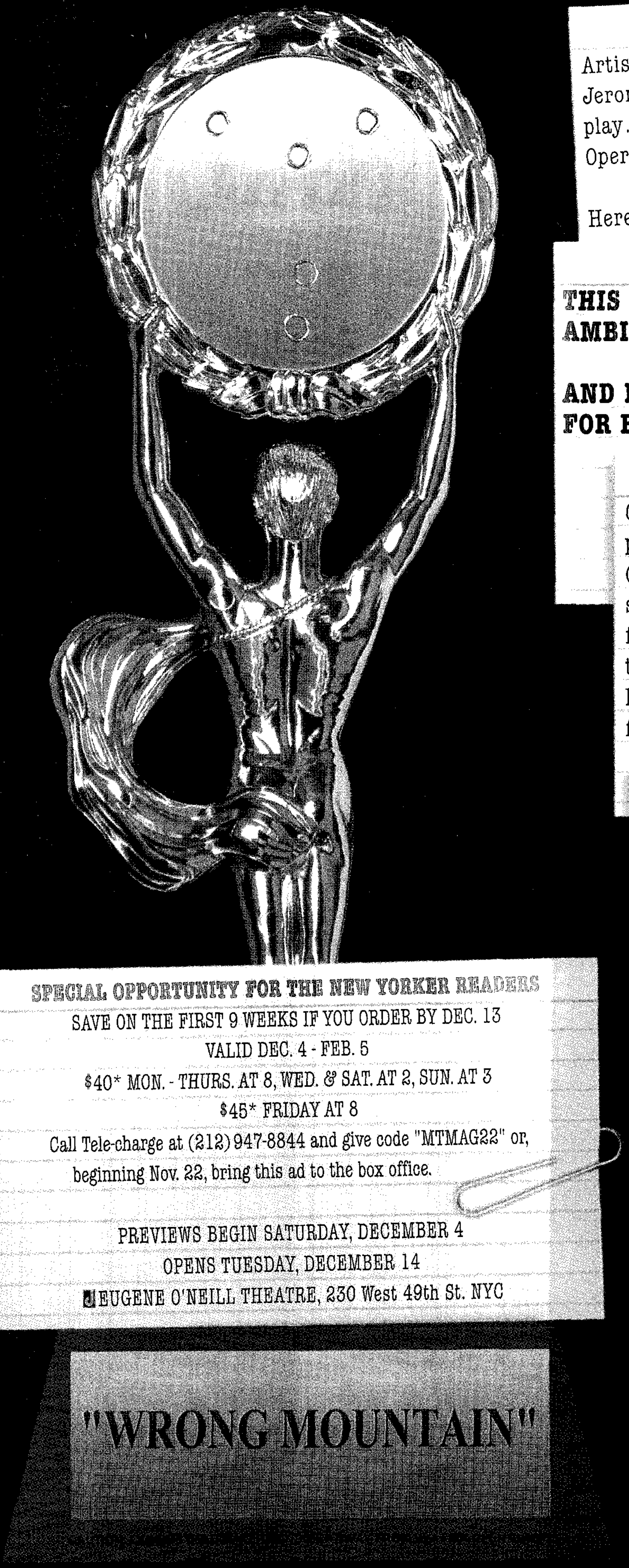

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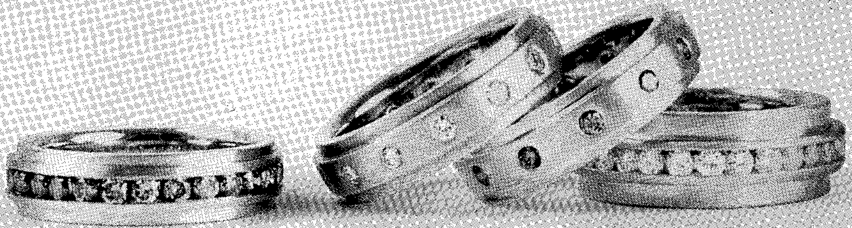
ple, is a passage from a letter Suckling recently sent to his long-suffering dissertation adviser at Stony Brook, from which he is on a many-times-extended leave:

> Wilderness is itself an event of deconstruction. Wilderness bewilders. The bewildering is a dis-orienting, a loss of the directionality inherent in willful subjectivity. Without centering principle, wilderness is the constitution (if such a word makes sense anymore) of every being by every other being, the co-constitution of plant, animal, virus, cloud, breeze, stream, rock and mountain. Meanings weave, unweave, proliferate and dissipate. This is the realm of monstrous, promiscuous Pan, half-human, half-animal, everywhere alive. Socrates panics.

What deconstructionists usually deconstruct is texts and meanings. But for a deconstructionist turned radical environmentalist, like Kierán Suckling, the only way to get to the desired state of "absolute relativism" among species is to deconstruct stuff that exists in the world: legal arrangements, social and economic forms, and even physical structures. The first artifact of civilization that the center trained its sights on, in 1989, was the United States Forest Service.

In a remote place like Catron County, the Forest Service is the largest landowner and the largest employer, and senior staff members are much closer to the rancher cultural style than to the environmentalist one: they wear cowboy hats, tinted glasses, bolo ties, big silver belt buckles, and cowboy boots. In the eighties, the Forest Service found itself caught between two opposing forces. The Reagan Administration established numerically high logging targets, manifesting its warm relations with ranchers and loggers, while the environmental movement was bringing the public around to the idea that the Forest Service's mission should change fundamentally, from maximizing commercial production to preserving the forests.

The center people wandered into this conflict when they were hired as owl counters in the summer of 1989. The Forest Service had become sufficiently concerned about the impact of logging on birds to sponsor the counts, but one couldn't wander through the forest for any length of time without noticing big sawed-off stumps everywhere—the remains of logging done to meet the targets. Suckling and Galvin knew whom to blame. During their Earth First! days, they had absorbed the attitude that the Forest Service is an agency motivated entirely by a pathetic



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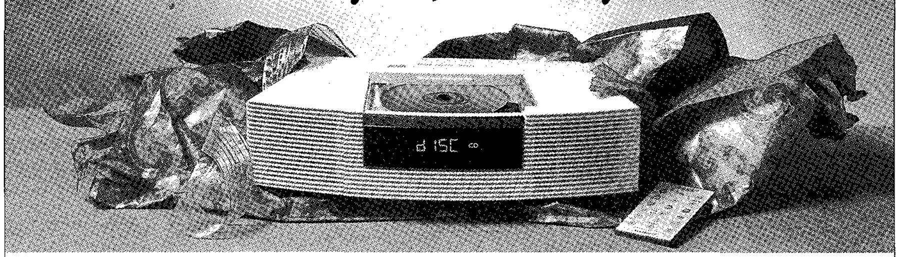

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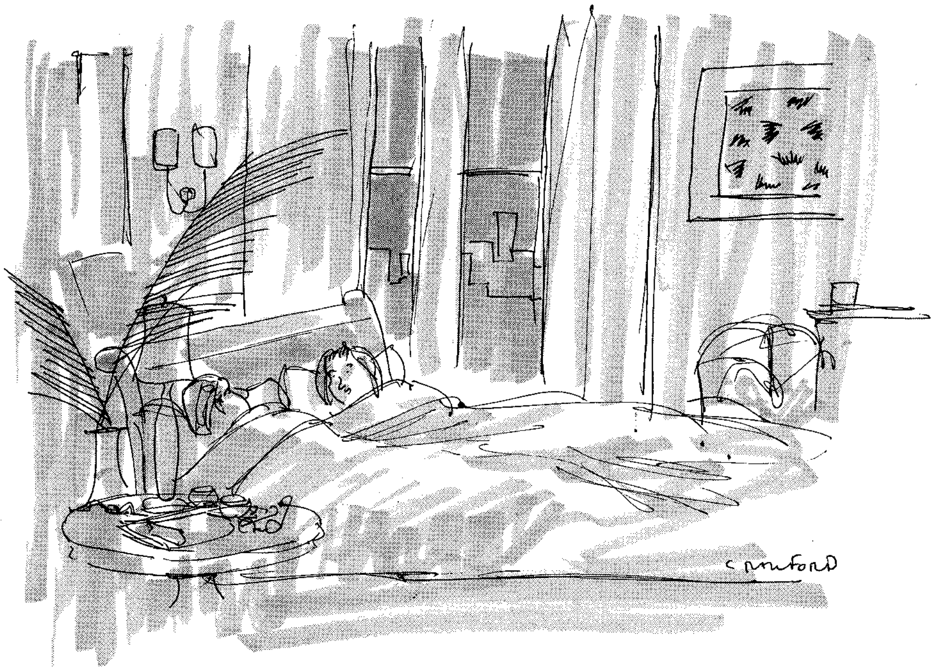


"Don't be silly. If something's worth doing, it's worth doing fast!"

need to please loggers and ranchers—in other words, it's the enemy.

The Forest Service, in turn, dislikes the center in a mystified, tight-lipped way. Bob Leaverton, a district ranger, described to me one of many failed attempts to placate Peter Galvin during the many years of their confrontations about logging permits: "I'd walk up to a specific tree and say, 'Peter, this tree's diseased. Why not cut it down and make a two-by-four so somebody can build a house in Phoenix?' And he says, 'No. Can't do it. There's still mistletoe in it. Mistletoe is part of the ecosystem.' "

In 1993, when the center finally succeeded in getting the spotted owl listed as an endangered species, Suckling and Galvin were catapulted into public-enemy status in Catron County. Among the places most affected was the county seat, Reserve, home to a sawmill, one bar, two cafés, and two motels. The sawmill, which was close to the tepee where Kierán Suckling was living, shut down, and Reserve lost jobs and revenue. The townspeople turned against the environmentalists in their midst; there were threats and stony-cold looks on the street. Tires were slashed. Phone lines were cut. Sometimes Suckling would make the long walk out from his tepee to the road where his car was parked and find that somebody had defecated on it. Once, a makeshift wanted poster appeared in the Catron County courthouse, featuring Suckling's and Galvin's photographs with crosshairs superimposed on them.

They decided to move out of town. A sympathetic ranch owner outside Luna, New Mexico, a nearby town, agreed to rent them a little ramshackle complex of buildings at the end of a seventeen-mile dirt road. After a year, during which Suckling and Galvin filed their myriad petitions from a place with no electricity and a solar-powered fax machine, their landlord came to them and said, "Boys, I'm going to have to ask you to leave"—they guessed it was because he was getting too many complaints from the neighbors about harboring them. In 1993, the center relocated its headquarters to Silver City, New Mexico, a medium-sized town just outside the Gila National Forest, and in 1995 it moved again, to Tucson, a place from which managing a sizable operation is feasible.

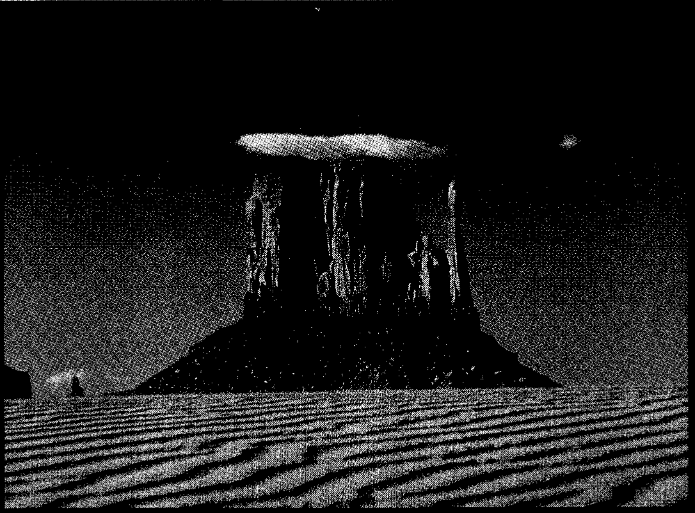
SINCE the center is endeavoring to undo the dominion of man over animals and plants, it's appropriate that, after its move to Tucson, it began to turn its attention from forests to water—the opposite of the order in which God proceeded. First, it got such water-proximate species as the Southwestern willow flycatcher, the Huachuca water umbel (a small grassy plant related to parsley), and the loach minnow placed on the endangered list. Then it went after cattle grazing. If the Southwest's riparian areas—wide floodplains through which usually tiny streams flow—are declared to be critical habitat for endangered species, they can be fenced off from cattle. This would have a devastating effect on ranchers, because their herds, roaming over vast areas of desert, drink from the streams. If the cattle can't get into those areas, they can't drink, and that means that owning grazing permits to all the land surrounding the streams does the ranchers no good.

As much as ranchers need water, they need very little compared with cities and towns, which in the Southwest depend completely on dams and the tapping of underground aquifers. In the environs of Tucson, the center has won endangered-species designation for the cactus ferruginous pygmy owl, a bird with a large population in Mexico but a tiny one—perhaps forty birds—in southern Arizona. When the center was able to prevent the construction of the new suburban high school in Tucson by hoisting the pygmy-owl banner, Harold Vangilder, the city-council member from Sierra Vista, said, "They shut down a high school to save a pygmy owl nobody'd ever seen." In the future, because any substantial building activity in Tucson requires a federal water permit, the center could plausibly swoop in and try to stop a project by arguing that the permit would threaten the pygmy owl.

Fifty miles away, in Sierra Vista, the center is waging its most intense fight of the moment, again over water—in this case, the San Pedro River. Sierra Vista, just north of the Mexican border, sits surrounded by mountains, on a high table of land so broad, flat, and pale that everything there that was built by people looks from a distance like confetti scattered across the dun-colored ground.

You could live in Sierra Vista without realizing that there *is* a San Pedro River. It meanders, small and green, through the desert ten miles to the east of the town, a creek such as you might find running through somebody's back yard in the East. To the center, however, it is maximally important, because it is the

LIFE IS TOO



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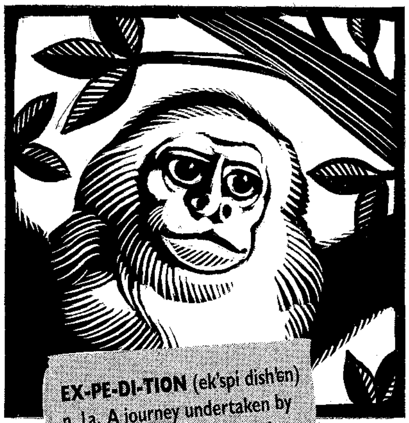

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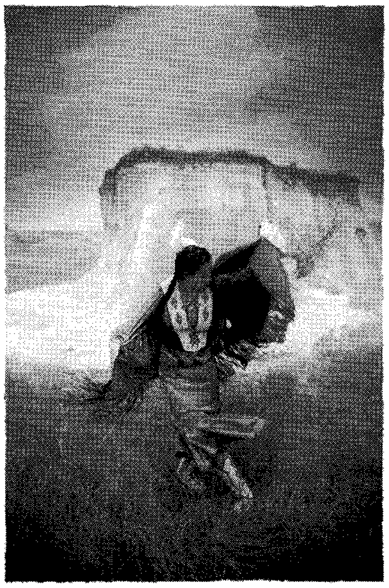
only remaining undammed, free-flowing major river in the Southwest. One morning, I met a woman, Sandy Anderson, who belongs to the center's informal gang of compadres. She took me to the river, and at one point in our walk she stopped and delivered a short speech: "When I stand on the bank of this river, I feel an overwhelming sadness, which quickly turns to anger, at anyone who wouldn't say we've got to save this river at all costs. It's a national and international treasure, as important as Yosemite and Yellowstone, the Eiffel Tower, or any of these things."

ALTHOUGH the center group has settled down, comparatively speaking, Robin Silver's suburban-style ranch house, in central Phoenix, feels like a center command post where he happens to nest. Silver's room looks like a sleepable sliver of bed surrounded by camping equipment. Interns and other friends of the center are constantly in and out. There is a surprisingly complex security system. Silver, explaining why he has never married, waved his hand helplessly in a way that connoted the gestalt of the house and said, "I can't blame some of these women—it just gets too intense."

Kierán Suckling, though, is married and a homeowner, and he has gone from subsistence wages to a salary of thirty thousand dollars a year. The center has begun attracting funding from foundations, such as the Patagonia Inc. Foundation, the Rockefeller Family Fund, the Pew Charitable Trusts, and Ted Turner and Jane Fonda's philanthropic operation. (Turner owns one per cent of the state of New Mexico.) There are new branch offices in San Diego and Berkeley, and many new activities. The center is trying to get a hundred new endangered-species designations in California alone. It is at the peak of its influence, which can be a perilously exposed position.

The obvious irony about the center is that the means to its desired end of a de-technologized society require the most complicated, technical, top-down procedures imaginable: scientific studies of species and habitat, legal petitions, court orders. Suckling cheerfully admits that he's "using one side of industrial society against itself," but only temporarily; in the long run, he says, there would be a new order in which plants and animals



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are part of the polity. For example, legal proceedings could be conducted outdoors—in which case "the trees will make themselves felt."

Another possibility, though, is that the center's use of the techniques of power in modern society is appropriate, because, rather than being mere representatives of nature, Suckling and the others are actually higher-order creatures engaged in a power struggle with other higher-order creatures over who gets to control the Southwest. If you deconstructed the center's activities, you might conclude that it is part of the entirely human ecology of a region where it isn't possible for people not to be in charge. The human ecology of the Southwest has got out of balance, because the Center for Biological Diversity has been spectacularly good at amassing disproportionate power for itself. In the end, perhaps, other humans will figure out how to reduce the center's power.

In May, Senator Pete Domenici, of New Mexico, proposed federal legislation that would surgically deprive the center of its main tactic by making the designation of critical habitat a separate process from the designation of endangered species. If this bill passes, winning an endangered-species designation would no longer bring with it an automatic gift of territory. The old-line environmental groups have been warning Suckling for years that he was going to overplay his hand and get the Endangered Species Act watered down, and now it looks as though they may have been right.

Even if Domenici's bill becomes law, the center will still have made an enormous difference. The Southwest, and the agencies that control so much of it, have moved in the center's direction. People who want to use the land to make money have less influence; people who want to preserve it as an aesthetic treasure have more influence. Precisely by being so self-righteous and impossible, the center has been an important part of the change. This isn't quite the same thing as ushering in an era of biodiversity, though. Another metaphor, more appropriate to the history of the region, captures better what Kierán Suckling and his mates have done. They're outlaws. Outlaws cause trouble, alter the established order, and make authority figures angry. And, in the end, they get dealt with. ♦

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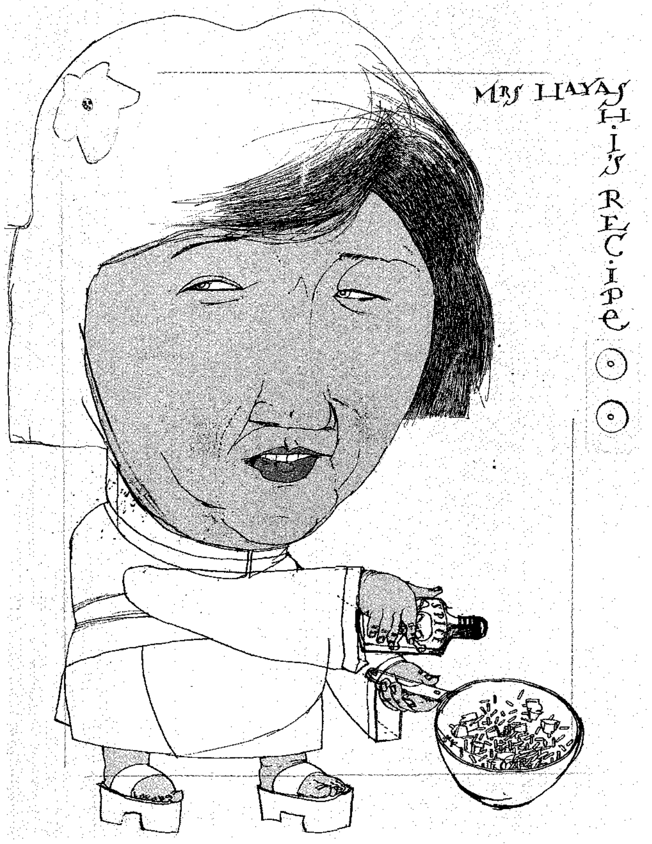
LETTER FROM JAPAN

POISON

Why a puzzling village crime has unnerved a nation.

BY MURRAY SAYLE

BETWEEN the gray rainy season and the scorching tropical summer, the Japanese islands usually enjoy a seductively short second spring. It is the ideal time to hold a village festival, provided that the right day is chosen—after the rains stop, but before the heat sets in. Last year, the residents of Sonobe, an affluent village on Japan's main island of Honshu, were congratulating themselves on a perfect pick. Saturday, July 25th, dawned clear and windless, promising a fine day and a balmy evening, when a communal supper of curried beef and rice was to be served.



No event has so shaken Japan since members of the Aum Shinrikyo cult released Sarin gas in the Tokyo subway.

DAVID HUGHES

Kaari raisu, which is popular throughout Japan, is an easy dish to make. Even so, an outdoor meal for more than a hundred people needs quite a bit of preparation. A vacant lot about the size of a tennis court at the end of Sonobe's only street had been selected as the festival site, and the catering had been entrusted to about twenty village women, loosely organized as a *fujin-kai,* a ladies' league. They had borrowed two six-gallon gas-fired aluminum cooking pots from a nearby restaurant and set them up, with a smaller pot, in a neighbor's open-sided carport, a few steps from the vacant lot. The village association had hired a tent in case of rain, low folding tables, a blue plastic tarpaulin for the guests to sit on (chairs are not used for celebratory meals in Japan), and a tape player for an after-dinner karaoke sing-along. On Friday evening, the women had bought rice, frozen beef, curry concentrate, beer, and soda, and they rose very early on Saturday morning to buy fresh vegetables, which they washed and sliced in their own kitchens. The three pots of curry were put on to cook in the carport at around eight-thirty. Relays of village women, two by two, kept an eye on the simmering pots, stirring them occasionally with long-handled ladles. Even Masumi Hayashi, whose big house and lavish life style made her the most envied woman in the village, and who had injured her legs in an accident, showed up to take her turn. By around noon, the curry was declared done, the gas rings

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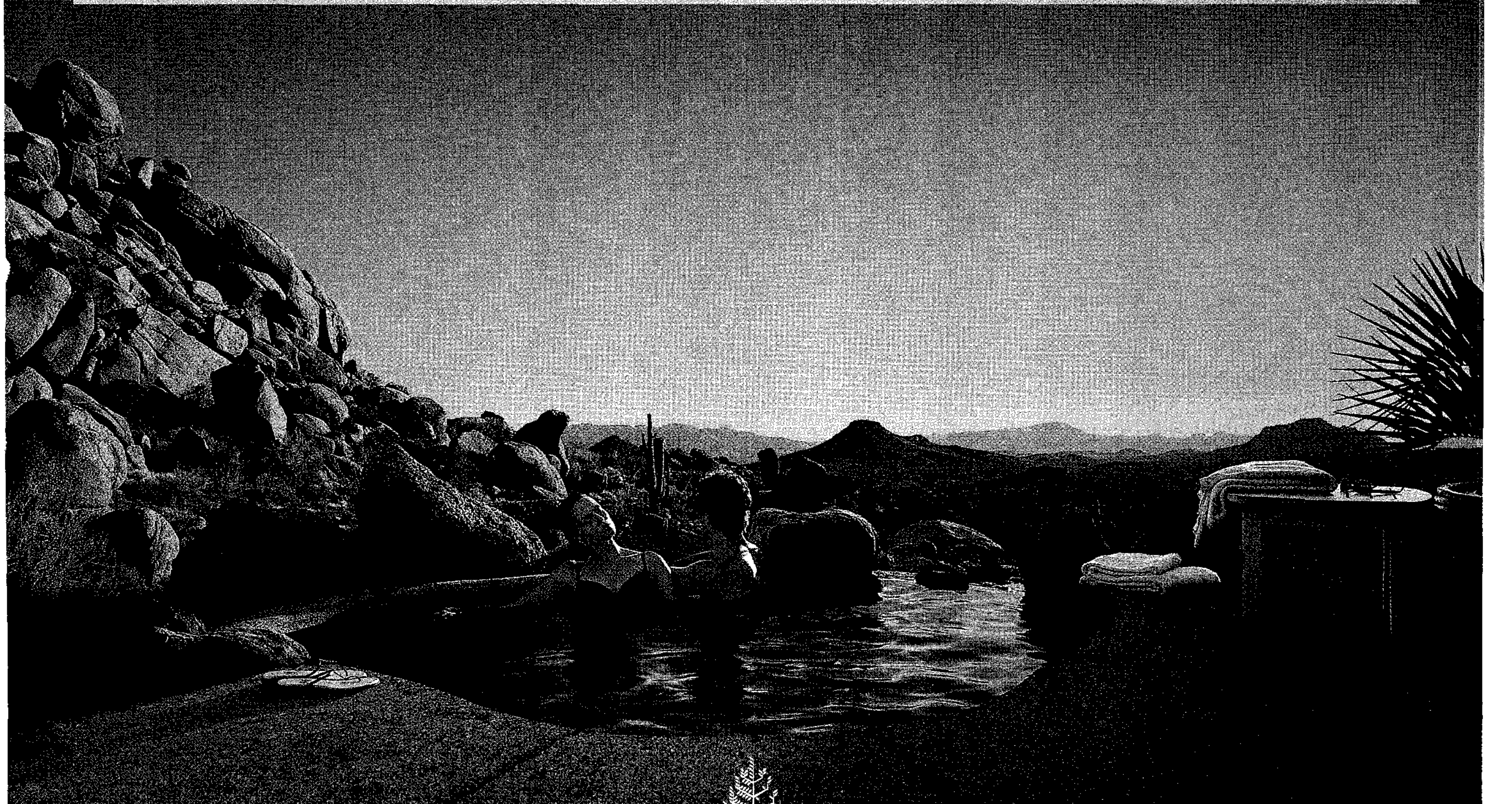

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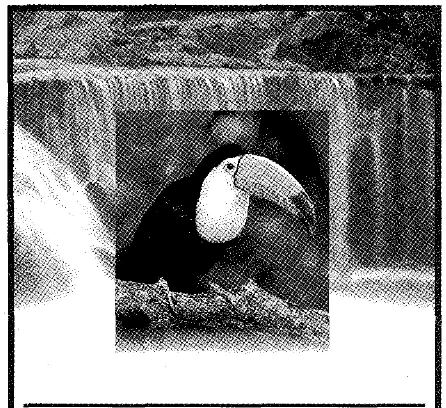

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That lofty stand of trees beyond the field,
Which in the storms of summer stood revealed

As a great fleet of galleons bound our way
Across a moiled expanse of tossing hay,

Full-rigged and swift, and to the topmost sail
Taking their fill and pleasure of the gale,

Now, in this leafless time, are ships no more,
Though it would not be hard to take them for

A roadstead full of naked mast and spar
In which we see now where the crow's nests are.

—Richard Wilbur

were turned down, and the pots were covered with foil to keep out bugs and cats.

The guests, all villagers, began to arrive at five o'clock and stood around chatting and drinking. The pots were brought from the carport and set out on a folding bench under the open-sided tent. At six, in the cool of early evening, the women uncovered the first pot, and a line began to form for the curry. As a mark of respect, the first served were Takatoshi Taninaka, the head of Sonobe's village association, and his deputy, Takaaki Tanaka. The village chief tasted the curry, declared it excellent, praised the cooks, and spoke a few words of welcome. The line then moved briskly forward, hungry children following the officials, and within minutes some seventy villagers had been served and the first curry pot emptied.

Almost immediately, people started to vomit and collapse. Taninaka and his deputy, both stricken, did their best to direct relief operations, ordering calls to the police, to the ambulance service, and to the public-health office. Emergency vehicles inched down the single street to the festival site. Some people went home to be sick. Others managed to help their neighbors stagger two hundred yards to a clinic run by a respected elderly surgeon, Dr. Maeda, who made a snap diagnosis of food poisoning. The municipal public-health office made the same diagnosis as sixty-three victims were rushed to fourteen hospitals in Wakayama, a small city across the Ki River from Sonobe. By the next morning, four people were dead: Takatoshi Taninaka, Takaaki Tanaka, and two children, Miuki Torii, a sixteen-year-old girl, and a mischievous ten-year-old boy named Hirotaka Hayashi. Forty villagers remained in the hospitals, and the doctors issued a new diagnosis—of cyanide poisoning—which implied murder.

No event has so shaken Japan since members of the Aum Shinrikyo cult released Sarin nerve gas in the Tokyo subway at rush hour four years ago, allegedly on the instructions of their leader, Shoko Asahara. Twelve people were killed and more than five thousand required medical treatment. But the only suspect in the Wakayama case is someone who may have known all the victims personally: Masumi Hayashi, the envied curry cook. She is now being held in solitary confinement in Wakayama, where she is on trial for four murders, more than sixty attempted murders, and multiple insurance frauds. The Japanese are shocked not only by the senseless and random cruelty of the poisoning but also by the fact that the suspect is a mother of four and her alleged victims were her neighbors. Mrs. Hayashi is, in effect, accused of poisoning not only them but also the national ideal of a trusting, coöperating community.

MASUMI HAYASHI started out as a very promising member of the Japanese national family. She was born in 1962, in Arita, in Wakayama Prefecture, a rugged province on Honshu's Pa-

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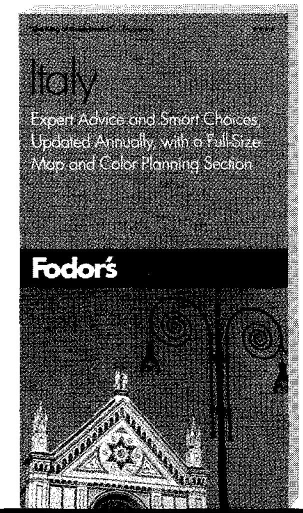
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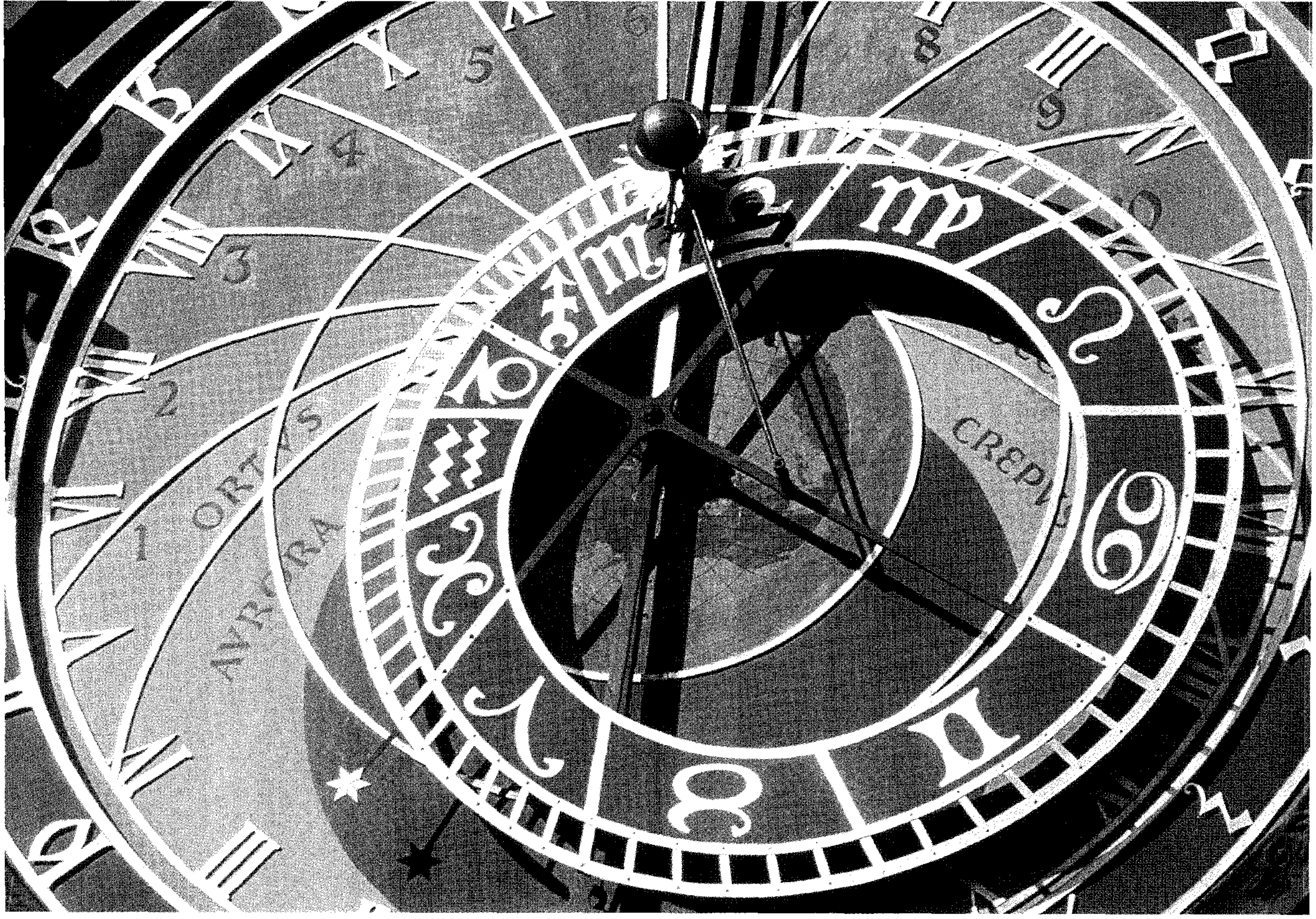

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Europe's treasury of artistic and historical artifacts extends far beyond the cultural citadels of London and Paris. This year Weimar, Germany is being honored by the European Union (EU) as its 1999 City of Culture. Weimar was once a thriving salon for eighteenth and nineteenth-century composers and writers. Luminaries such as Liszt, Bach, Schiller, and Goethe all enjoyed its creative climate. And to celebrate the continent's rich heritage, the EU has named an unprecedented number of cities as cultural capitals for the year 2000. Through a dazzling yearlong array of art exhibits and events, the nine chosen ones will display their uniqueness to the world. To provide a sampling of what these diverse cities have to offer, Fodor's editors have compiled a list of the must-see sights in each of these cultural capitals.

Text adapted from Fodor's Gold Guides

VIGNON
FRANCE
VILLE D'ESPRIT

Behind a protective ring of stocky towers amid a warren of medieval alleys lies the magnificent papal stronghold of Avignon. With a colorful history dating from its reign as the capital of Christendom, Avignon is the cultural center of Provence.

The colossal **Palais des Papes** was home to seven exiled popes from 1309 to 1377. Its austere Old Palace is decorated with fourteenth-century frescoes and eighteenth-century Gobelin tapestries. The main attraction of the more lavish New Palace is the Grand Audience, a magnificent two-nave hall.

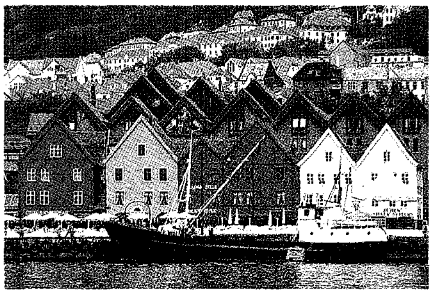
The **Pont Bénézet** is the source of the famous children's song: "*Sur le pont d'Avignon on y danse, on y danse . . .*" Unlike London Bridge, this one still stretches its arches over the river, but only partway—half of the bridge was washed away in the seventeenth century. The hilltop garden known as the **Rock of the Domes** offers extraordinary views of the palace, the rooftops of old Avignon, and the St.-Bénézet bridge.

Avignon's Palais des Papes

ERGEN
NORWAY
GATEWAY TO THE FJORDS

People from Bergen like to say they do not come from Norway but from Bergen. Enfolded in the crook of seven mountains and fish-boned by seven fjords, Bergen does seem remote from the rest of Norway. Founded in 1070, Bergen became Norway's most international city in the Middle Ages while Oslo was still an obscure village.

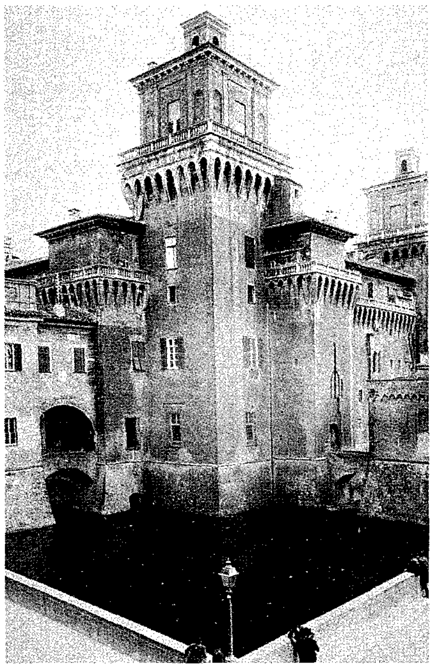
The best way to get a feel for Bergen's medieval trading heyday is to visit the **Hanseatic Museum.** One of the oldest and best-preserved of Bergen's wooden buildings, it is furnished in sixteenth-century style. **Troldhaugen Manor** on Nordas Lake, once home to composer Edvard Grieg, is now a museum that incorporates a new chamber-music hall. The most astonishing view of Bergen is from the top of the **Fløyen**, the most popular of the city's seven mountains. Fløibanen (a funicular) takes you to a lookout 1,070 feet above the sea.



Fjordside Bergen

OLOGNA
ITALY
TREASURY OF FINE ARTS

Bologna's narrow cobblestoned streets remain as they were hundreds of years ago, as do its ancient churches, massive palaces, medieval towers, and famous porticoes. Over the years, Bologna has acquired a number of nicknames including "Bologna, the Learned" in honor of its venerable university; "Bologna, the Red" for its terra-cotta rooftops; and "Bologna, the Fat," a tribute to its preëminent position in the world of cuisine.



Estensi Castle in Bologna

Santo Stefano, a splendid and unusual basilica, is actually comprised of several churches. The oldest, Santi Vitale e Agricola contains a fourteenth-century nativity scene much loved by Bologna's children. The twin towers, **Torre degli Asinelli** and **Torre Garisenda**—mentioned by Dante in the "Inferno"—are two of the sixty towers remaining of more than two hundred that once presided over the city. Fine views of Bologna's famed rooftops await those who climb up the five hundred steep steps of Torre degli Asinelli.

In 1566, when sculptor Giambologna created the Baroque monument **Fontana del Nettuno**, with its exuberantly sensual mermaids and undraped God of the Sea, he drew fire, but not enough to dissuade the populace from using his fountain as a public washing stall for centuries thereafter.

RUSSELS
BELGIUM
CITY FOR CONNOISSEURS

At the end of the nineteenth century, Brussels was one of the liveliest cities in Europe, renowned for its splendid cafés and graceful Art Nouveau architecture. Today, as the capital of the European Union, it's a boomtown for international business and multinationals. Brussels strength is in its diversity.

Grand'Place, a jewelbox of a square, is arguably Europe's most ornate. At night the burnished facades of the guild houses and their gilded statuary look especially dramatic; the square is floodlit after sundown with waves of changing colors. **The Belgian Comic Strip Center** is wedded to another pervasive Belgium art form; its building was designed by the creator of Art Nouveau, Victor Horta.

The Erasmus House, a remarkable edifice, was home to the great humanist in 1521. Every detail of the fifteenth-century building is authentic, with period furniture, paintings by

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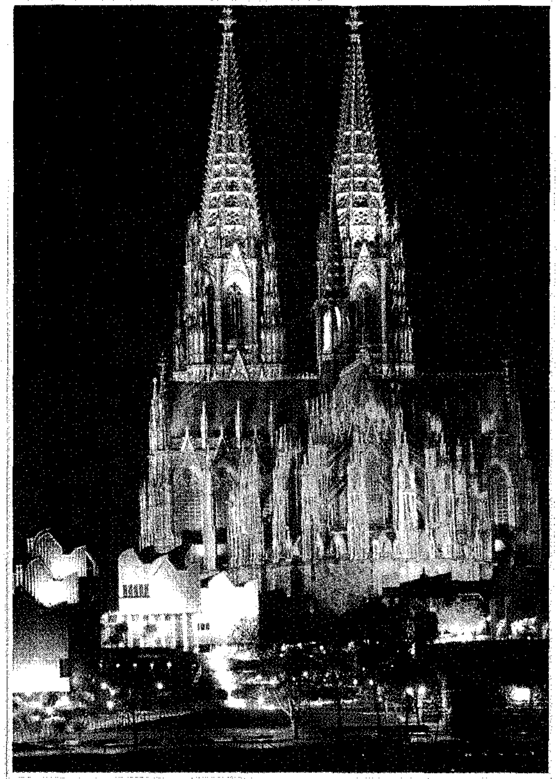

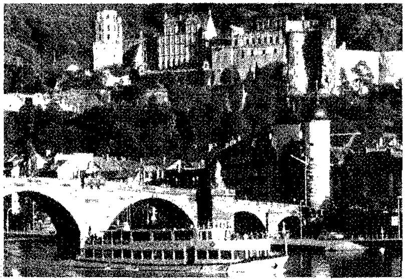

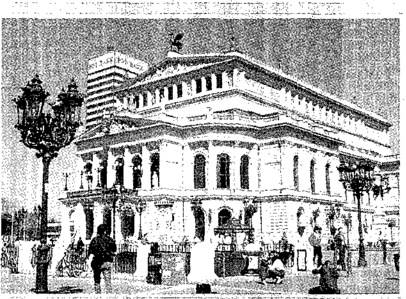

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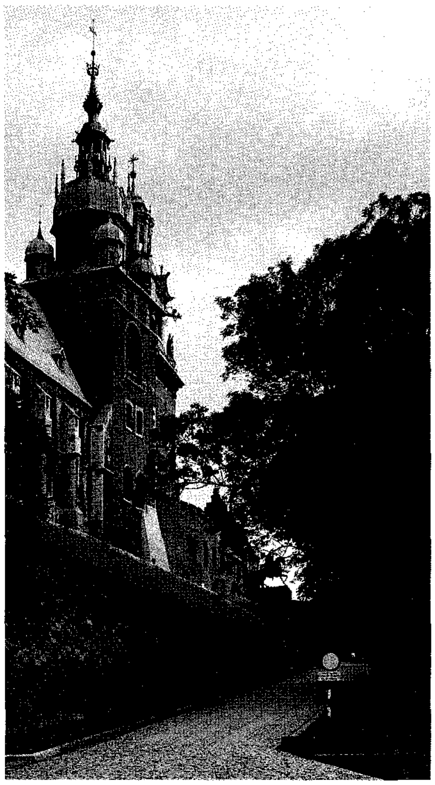


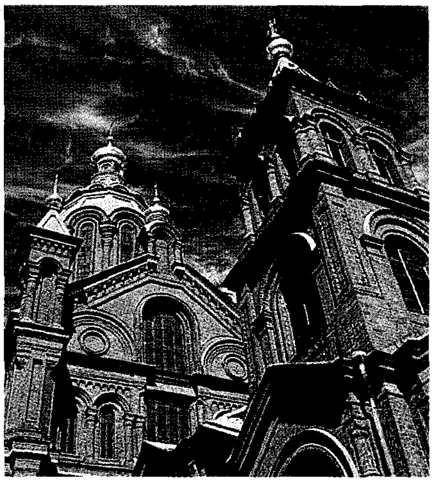
Wawel Castle

after a later fire, several parts of the Renaissance castle remain, including a beautiful arcaded courtyard.

ELSINKI
INLAND
LIVING WORK OF ART

A city of the sea, Helsinki was built along a series of odd-shaped peninsulas and islands jutting from the Baltic coast into the Gulf of Finland. Streets and avenues curve around bays; bridges reach to nearby islands; and ferries ply between offshore islands. Helsinki is as architecturally eye-catching as it is distinct from other Scandinavian capitals.

The attentive observer is bound to discover endless picturesque details, from grimacing gargoyles to buildings painted in striking colors with wildly contrasting flowers in the windows.



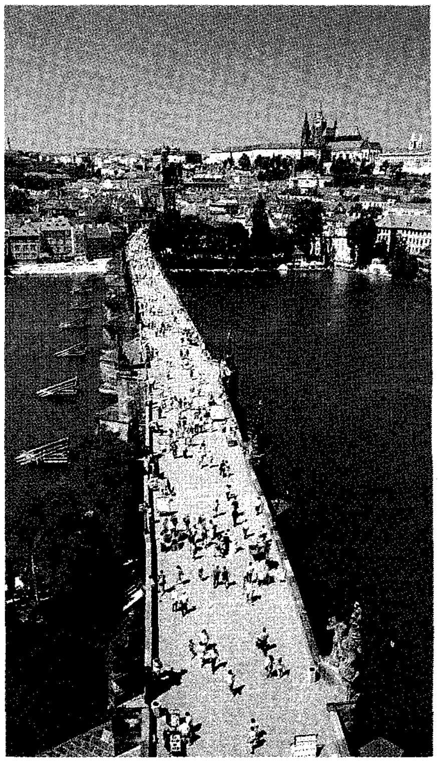
Helsinki's Uspenski Cathedral

The **Seurasaaren Outdoor Museum** was founded in 1909 to preserve rural Finnish architecture. Its old farmhouses and barns—many are rough-hewn log buildings dating from the seventeenth century—come from all over Finland. A former island fortress taken over by resident artists, **Suomenlinna** is a quirky collection of museums, parks, and gardens perennially popular with visitors. The island makes for a particularly lovely excursion in early summer when it's engulfed in mauve-and-purple mists of lilacs. Perched atop a small, rocky cliff over the North harbor in Katajanokka is the **Uspenski Cathedral**, the principal cathedral of the Russian Orthodox religion in Finland. Its brilliant gold onion domes are its hallmark, but the imposing redbrick edifice is no less impressive.

RAGUE
CZECH REPUBLIC
'HUNDRED-SPIRED' CITY

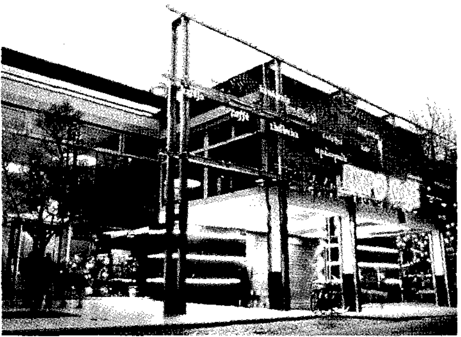
Poets and philosophers, as well as the average Czech on the street have long sung the praises of Praha, also referred to as the "golden city of a hundred spires." Like Rome, Prague is built on seven hills, which either slope gently or tilt precipitously down to the Vltava River. The city's riverside ambience, enhanced by a series of graceful bridges, makes a great setting for two of Prague's classic features: its extravagant, fairy-tale architecture and its memorable music.

From a narrow hilltop, the monumental **Prague Castle** has witnessed the changing fortunes of the city for more than a thousand years. Located at the castle's center, **St. Vitus Cathedral** took from 1344 to 1929 to build; it is possible to trace its architectural lineage from High Gothic to Art Nouveau. The **Old Jewish Cemetery** is one of Europe's most unforgettable sights. Here ancient tombstones lean into one another; below them, layer upon layer, are thousands of graves dating from the mid-fourteenth to the late-eighteenth centuries.



View of Prague and the Charles Bridge

Hanover has been thoroughly dressed up for Expo 2000, the first world's fair to be held in Germany. More than fifty pavilions representing countries and international organizations will coax visitors with indigenous music, dance, cuisine, and wares. Contact information: Thurnithistr. 2; Tel: 011 49 511 84040; Fax: 011 49 511 8404 480; June 1st–October 3rd. Tickets can be booked at travel agencies worldwide. For more information, contact the Hanover Tourist Office at 011 49 511 301422.



Expo Café in Hanover

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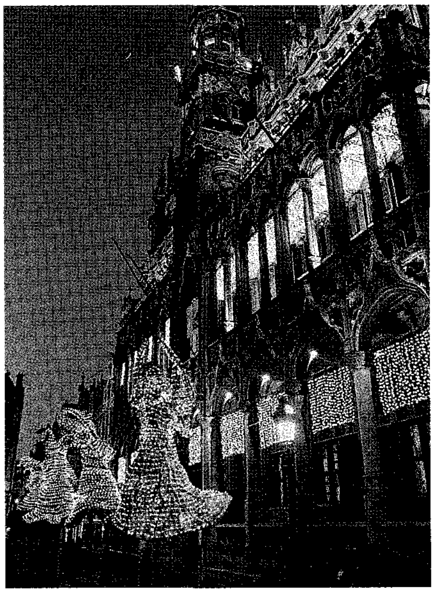

Christmastime at the Grand'Place in Brussels

Holbein and Hieronymus Bosch, and first editions of Erasmus's works, including "In Praise of Folly."

RAKÓW
OLAND
CENTURIES OF CULTURE

Renaissance arcades, enchanting onion domes, Baroque spires, storybook streets, and Leonardo da Vinci's sublime painting of "Cecilia Gallerani"—little wonder that the stunning beauty of this thousand-year-old city and its sights attracts hordes of visitors annually. One of the few Polish cities to escape the devastation of Hitler's armies, Kraków's fine towers, facades, and churches reflect seven centuries of Polish architecture.

The magnificent **The Main Market Square**, which is Europe's largest medieval marketplace, is on a par in size and grandeur with St. Mark's Square in Venice. A pageant of history has passed through this area—from the **House at the Sign of the Stag** where both Goethe and Czar Nicholas I found shelter to the House at the Sign of the Eagle where nationalist Tadeusz Kościuszko lived as a young officer in 1777. **The Royal Castle** that stands on Wawel Hill dates from the early sixteenth century, when it replaced the Romanesque residence that was destroyed by fire. King Sigismund the Old brought artists and craftsmen from all over Europe to create the castle. Despite Baroque reconstruction

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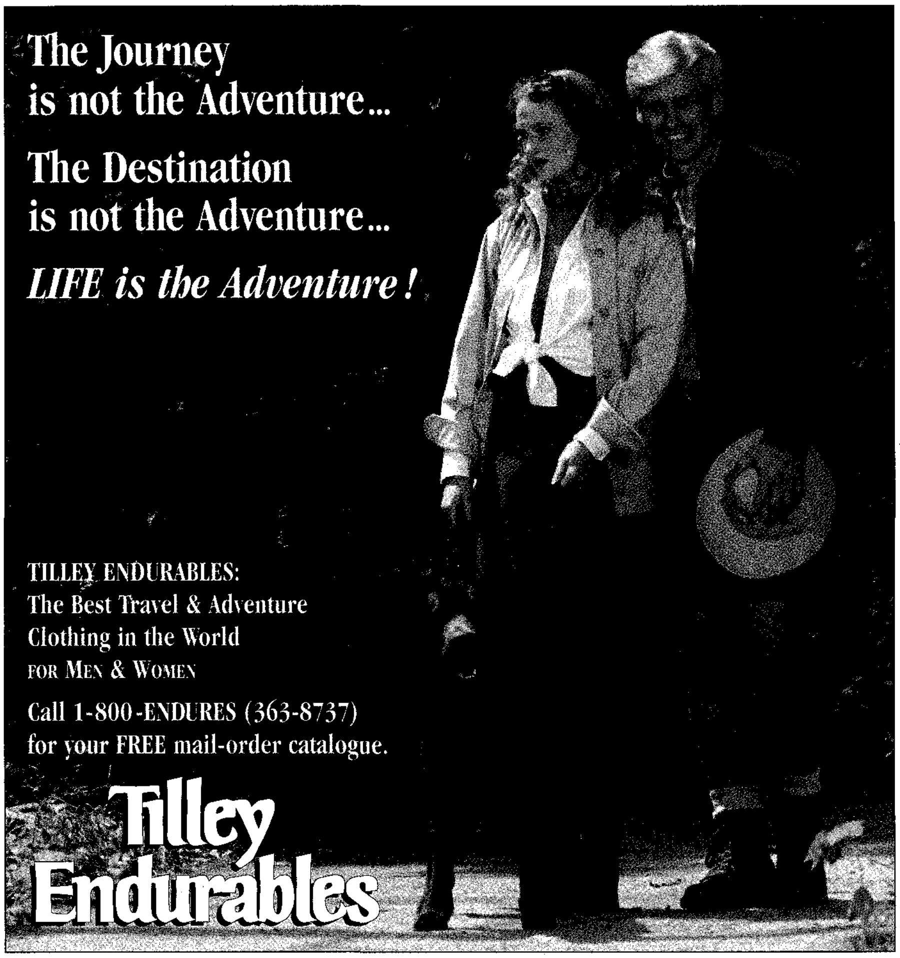

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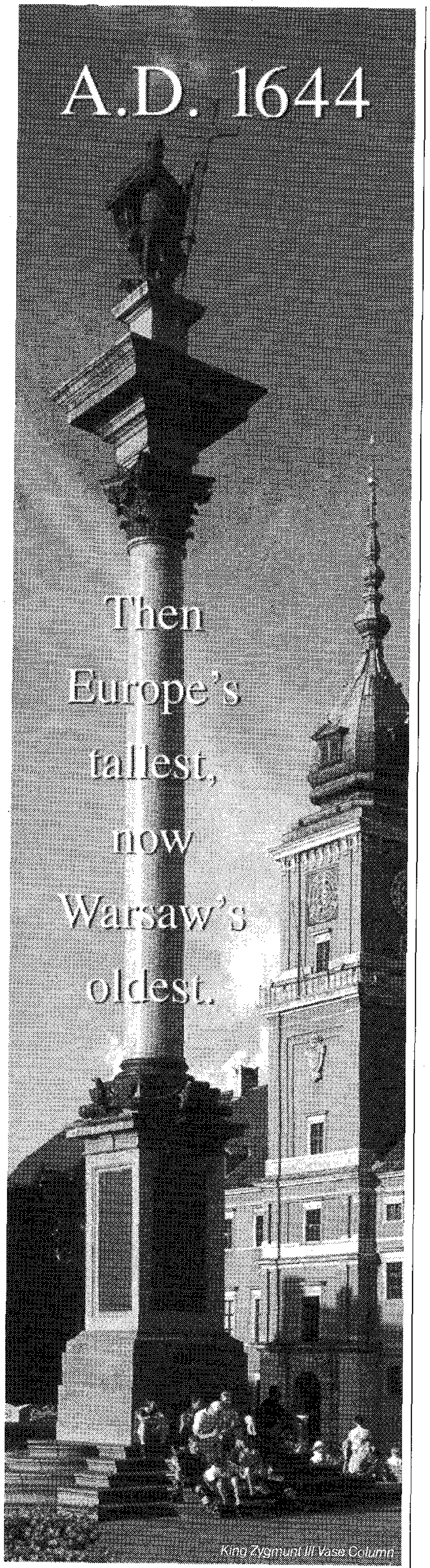
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NEIGHBORING NATURE

Overlooked by proud Mt. Esja, Reykjavík presents a colorful sight with its concrete houses painted in subtle hues and topped by vibrant red, blue, and green roofs. For a city of only 110,000, Reykjavík offers an astonishingly wide array of artistic events—the main cultural season is winter, but there's always plenty going on in summer too.

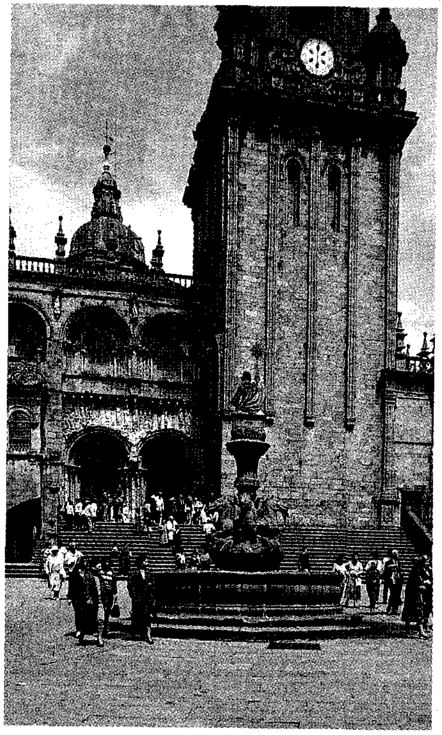
Reykjavík rooftops

Austurvöllur, a small square in Old Midtown, is truly the heart of Reykjavík. The nineteenth-century Parliament House, one of the oldest stone buildings in Iceland, faces the square while a heroic statue of Jon Sigurosson, the nationalist who led Iceland toward independence, stands at the square's center. High on a hill above the city, the Perlan, a glass dome, perches like a space station atop six huge towers that provide hot water for much of the capital. **Tjörnin**, *a natural, shallow lake*, is a haven for a variety of birds, from majestic swans to elegant but tenacious Arctic terns.

ANTIAGO DE OMPOSTELA
SPAIN
A CITY'S REVERED HERITAGE

In the Middle Ages, Santiago de Compostela, where the apostle St. James is said to be buried, was considered, after Jerusalem and Rome, the most important shrine in the Christian world. At its peak in the twelfth century, as many as two million people a year traveled here from all over Europe.

The sheer scale of the opulent **Cathedral** is awe inspiring; its main entrance is raised two stories above the welcoming Plaza del Obradoiro. The cathedral's twin towers give a sense of harmony, and the benevolent St. James, dressed in pilgrim's costume, smiles down from his perch. Just inside the main doorway is one of the finest examples of Romanesque sculpture in the world—the twelfth-century **Portico de la Gloria**. Santiago's **Old Town** is a maze of plazas and narrow streets—a remarkable number of them are covered by arched ceilings built in response to the region's stormy climate. You can almost traverse the entire town without stepping out from under the stone canopy.



Plaza in Santiago de Campostela's Old Town

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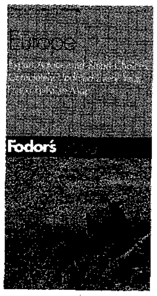

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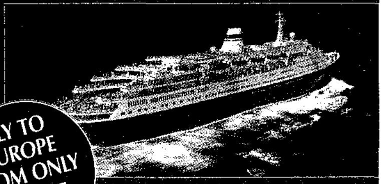

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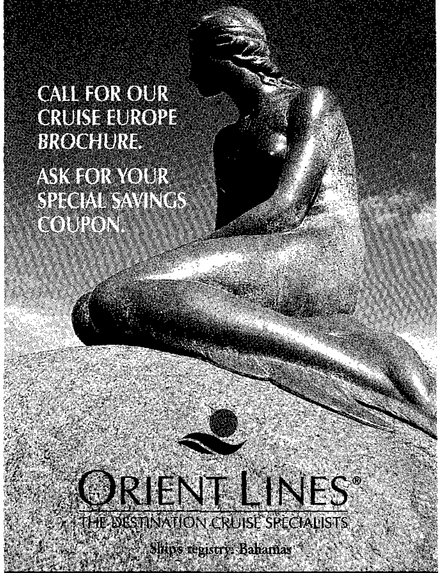

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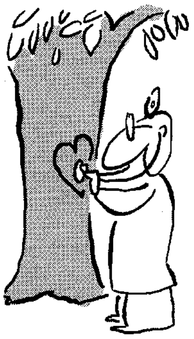
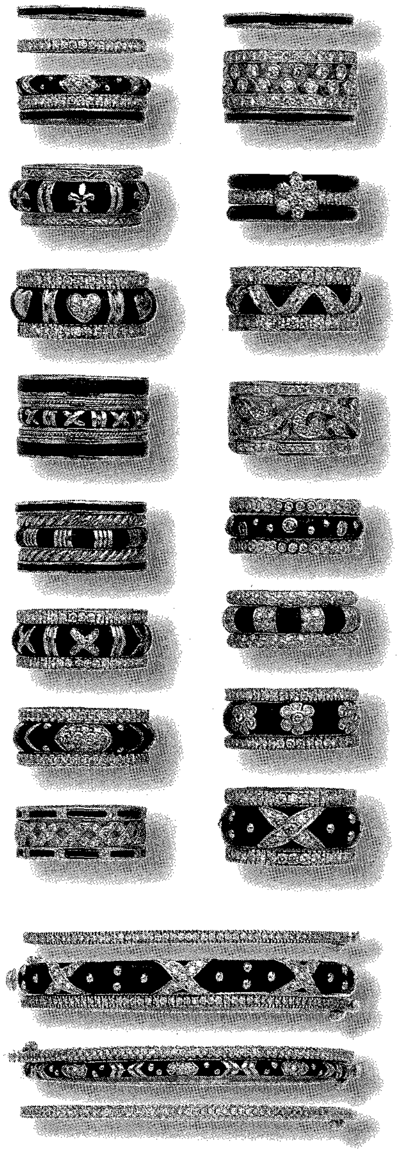
cific coast, which is something of an Asian Appalachia, where ancient folkways survive in isolated and impoverished mountain villages. Masumi, however, grew up in relative privilege. Her father and grandfather held high posts in the Arita fishermen's coöperative. In sushi-loving Japan, fishing is well-paid, steady work, and old fishing families rank as working-class aristocrats. Masumi's mother also prospered, as one of the thousands of Japanese housewives who work part time selling life insurance. Bright, outgoing, and self-reliant, Masumi attended an élite high school in Wakayama City, the capital of the province and its only industrialized city, and was accepted at a prestigious nursing school in nearby Osaka. Nursing is a highly respected profession in Japan, but Masumi never pursued it. She had been secretly seeing a married man, Kenji Hayashi, in Wakayama City. Soon after she graduated, he divorced his first wife, and they were married.

Kenji, who is now in his early fifties, is from Kagawa Prefecture, on the island of Shikoku, just across the Inland Sea from Wakayama, an area it resembles both physically and sociologically. In Kagawa, he worked as a taxi-driver, and as a clerk in a pachinko parlor, where customers gamble on a mechanized game based on pinball. According to the Leisure Development Center of Japan, the Japanese spend more on pachinko than they do on rice, golf, or education, and Kenji was a dedicated gambler. Then, sometime around 1980, he moved to Wakayama City and went into business as a termite exterminator. These facts are all that have been published about his background, although his notoriety has sparked many rumors. Kenji, who is being tried on a separate charge of insurance fraud, still has the tough good looks of a yakuza gangster-movie star—he has close-cropped gray hair and wears tinted glasses, even on cloudy days. Many Japanese have come to identify him as part of the *mizu shobai*, the "water business," a raffish world of small-time entertainers, crooks, misfits, and drifters.



Traditional Japanese cannot understand why a young woman with a promising career ahead of her would choose to marry an exterminator, an occupation they associate with the despised hereditary trade of ratcatcher. But the unlikely couple seem to have shared an outlook that many Japanese think of as Western: they saw life as a game to be won rather than as a set of strict Confucian rules to be followed. Under her graduation photograph in her nursing-school yearbook, Masumi Furukawa wrote, "My life is freedom"—an unusual sentiment for a conventional young Japanese woman, but one that is well understood in the water business. It has also been hinted that physical passion was important in the Hayashis' relationship. This is an unsettling idea in Japan, where marriage is still viewed as essentially a set of obligations, especially for women, and where too deep a sensual complicity is thought to destabilize the family and lead to trouble. Whatever the basis of the Hayashis' bond, it has proved strong enough to survive a year of separation and the strenuous efforts of Japanese interrogators to turn the couple against each other.

UNTIL the Hayashis were arrested, last October, Masumi kept house for her husband and bore him three daughters and a son—a sizable family in today's Japan—who are now reportedly aged between four and fifteen. In the morning, the three eldest could be seen happily marching off to school with the other village children, and the Hayashis are reported to have been fond, conscientious parents. (The children are now in the care of the Wakayama City Council.) From the early days of her marriage, Masumi also worked part time selling insurance, like her mother. Housewife saleswomen are the mainstay of Japan's insurance industry, where tradition boosts business: women take care of the household finances, and they prefer to deal with other women. Masumi was a good saleswoman, and Kenji's exterminating business was modestly profitable—at one point he claimed to have five employees and an income of fifty thousand dollars a year. In 1988, however, he developed a progressive paralysis that required frequent hospitalization, and he began to collect disability-insurance payments. In 1990, he closed his business, and he has had



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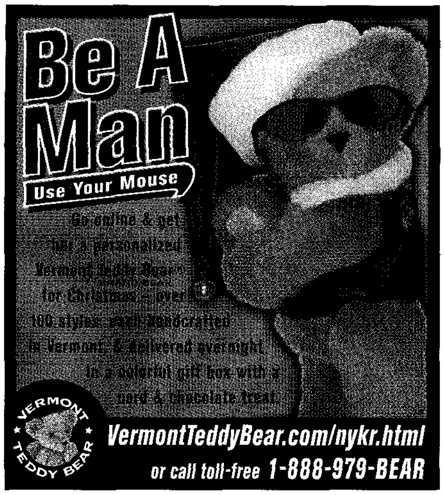
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no regular employment since. That year, Masumi took a full-time job with the Wakayama branch of Nippon Life, one of Japan's biggest insurance companies. She was an immediate success, writing policies in the million-dollar range, according to one report, and she usually finished among the top five in the firm's monthly selling contests. Later reports have described her as a temperamental, touchy colleague; but selling insurance, particularly in Japan, is highly competitive, and not for the meek.

IN 1995, the Hayashis bought and remodelled an already imposing two-story house, with a high-walled garden, in Sonobe. They reportedly paid close to a million dollars for it—a purchase that Masumi told a neighbor was made possible by an inheritance from her mother, who had recently died. For many years, Sonobe, which means "garden plot," had been a nondescript, run-down farming village set among rice fields. But in Japan's bubble economy of the late eighties the village was completely rebuilt, as farmers sold off part of their land to developers and built new, larger houses for themselves with the profits—and commuters with high-paying jobs in Wakayama City moved in. (Rice farmers in Japan are not allowed to sell their fields for development, so the new residences were built on the plots of the old village houses, each overlooking its neighbor's back yard.) Today, Sonobe is a divided community—like much of fast-suburbanizing Japan—with neither the wary anonymity of a big city nor the cohesiveness of a village whose families have worked side by side and intermarried for generations. Husbands who work in town now tend to drink with the office crowd after work, often with their secretaries and female colleagues; working wives socialize with their own workmates.

Sonobe now has sixty-five households; about half of them are new. By car, the village is hard to find, and by public transport it is an awkward journey from Wakayama City, two miles away, across the wide River Ki. I made my first visit by suburban train, getting off at the Musota Station, about a mile northeast of the village, and walking down Prefectural Highway No. 7, between the Izumi Mountains, which look like crumpled green blotting paper, and

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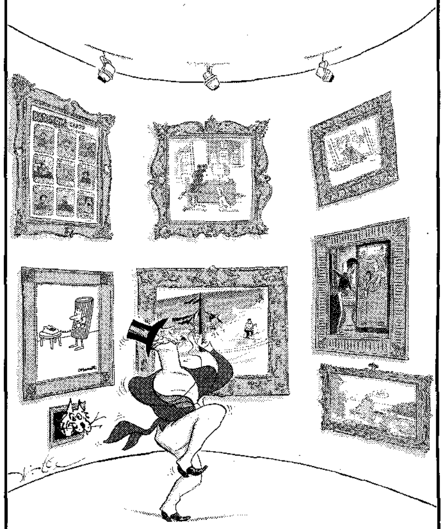

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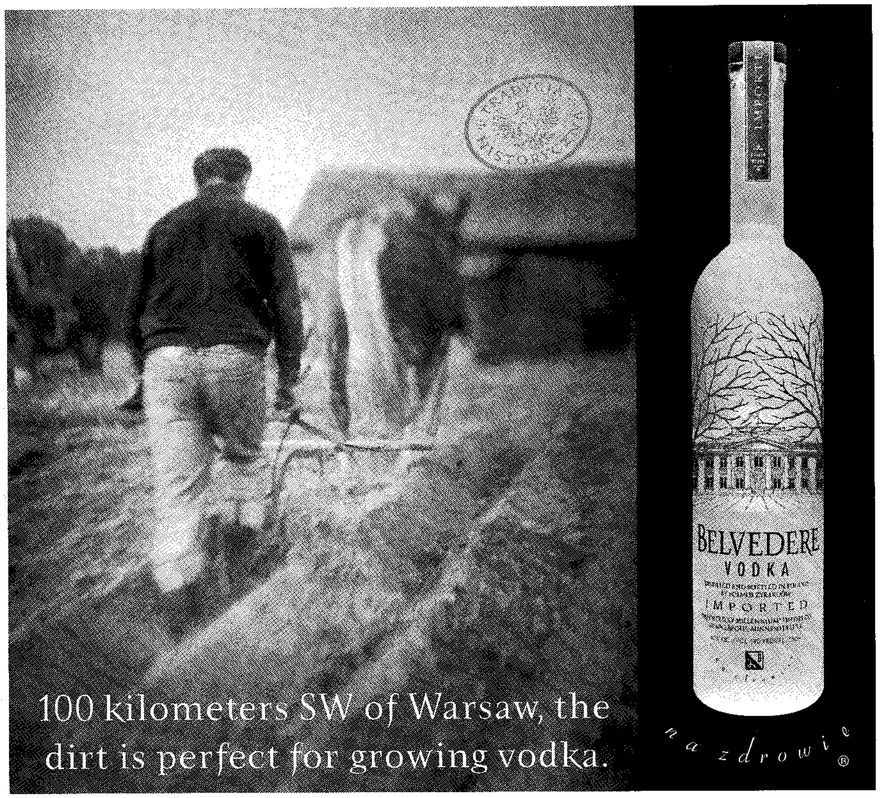
rice fields that stretch down to the riverbank. The unmarked turnoff to Sonobe is a road just five paces wide, with no sidewalks, which runs toward the river. There are many signs on the street prohibiting parking and demanding quiet. There is a gourmet restaurant but no friendly, cheap noodle house. Shop signs in English, a sure sign of new wealth in Japan, are everywhere. Pia's Sports sells Burberry raincoats, Slimist is a weight-reducing and skin-care salon, Wakayama Grooming College doubles as a pet hotel—businesses unimaginable to Sonobe's farmers a decade ago.

At the road's dead end, two hundred yards down, sits a cluster of closely set two-story houses, jarringly pretentious in the rustic setting. New money has bought every luxury upwardly mobile Japanese could want, except space and privacy. If there had not been one small lot still vacant, Sonobe would have had nowhere to hold its summer festival last year. The Hayashi house, which has been seized for debt payment, is one of the last on the road, and it is the biggest in Sonobe, but it sits on less than a tenth of an acre, and only a footpath separates it from a fetid irrigation ditch. Since the murders, the house has been vandalized and its garden wall daubed with obscene graffiti, something that is rarely seen in Japan, even in public rest rooms. But it also stands apart from its neighbors stylistically: its expensive Buddhist stone lantern is overbearingly large for a private house, its dwarfed pine trees ostentatiously small.

In February of 1996, barely a year after the Hayashis had moved to Sonobe, Masumi was scalded on both legs in an accident, which she said took place when she tried to ride her bike past an outdoor cooking pot on the footpath next to her garden. Her injuries were slow to heal; in December, she resigned from her job at Nippon Life, and drew substantial insurance payments, of reportedly more than four hundred thousand dollars, for her disability. After that, neighbors sometimes saw her driving a white BMW to Wakayama City and returning with shopping bags from the food sections of department stores, which sell the most expensive provisions in provincial Japan, and she occasionally held court with other Sonobe housewives at the Flower Lamp teahouse. The teahouse manageress remembers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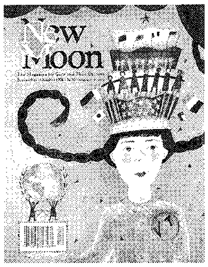

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Masumi doing most of the talking at these gatherings and hoisting her bandaged legs on a chair in a rather "daring" way.

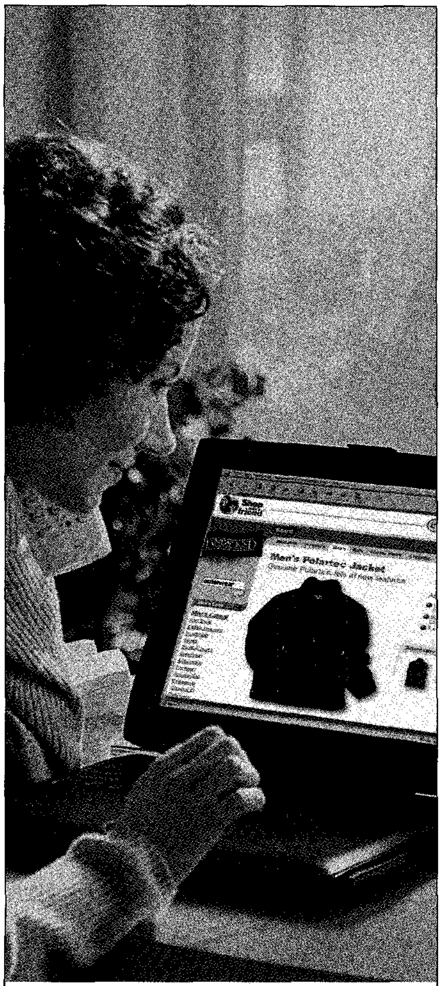
On the rare occasions when Kenji went out, he was seen leaning on Masumi's arm as they walked to the car. Nevertheless, he led a conspicuously busy social life. The remodelling of the Hayashi house included the addition of a small room in the garden for playing mah-jongg, the ancient Chinese game that has become the favorite of Japanese high-stakes gamblers. Mah-jongg can be a noisy pursuit, as players slap plastic tiles on the table, call their bets, and drink toasts. Kenji's games sometimes lasted all night, neighbors noted, with sums equivalent to half a million dollars reputedly changing hands, and, Kenji told his neighbors, he never lost. His non-gambling wife and family apparently slept through these raucous sessions, but Masumi herself, according to the prosecution at her trial, was known to play the piano loudly at midnight, and to honk her horn indiscriminately while driving, and she allegedly showed little interest in doing her share of the chores that are performed by the community, like garbage recycling and street-cleaning. "Masumi made a big impact on people here," the teahouse manageress told me, but whether this was because people were hostile to the Hayashis or were simply curious about their exotic life style, she could not say.

The two main religions of Japan, Shinto and Buddhism, do not hold regular services, and home entertaining is still rare, but Japanese tradition establishes other occasions for neighbors to socialize and to resolve their differences. Festivals are frequently held at Shinto shrines, and sometimes in Buddhist temples, at which everyone is welcome. Each household is expected to contribute around ten dollars a month to pay for these rites of neighborliness, and the fees are collected by unpaid officials of the village (or neighborhood) association. Originally the parish council of the local Shinto shrine, a village association works by unwritten rules, friendly persuasion, and the presumption that everyone deserves respect, understanding, and trust. What the Japanese call their "beautiful customs" make up a system that is warmly supportive of those who play by the rules, but is less tolerant of rebels.

Old Sonobe's summer festival had disappeared long ago, but it was revived in recent years by the head of the village association, Takatoshi Taninaka, a sixty-four-year-old retired official of the Wakayama City Council, whose sizable retirement bonus had enabled him to buy a house in Sonobe. A model of the Confucian principle that a gentleman takes responsibility for the general welfare, Taninaka was well liked and respected. The officers of village associations are chosen by an unspoken consensus. Taninaka performed his job so expertly that he held it year after year, as did his deputy, fifty-three-year-old Takaaki Tanaka, the owner of Sonobe's only hardware store. More than a year after their deaths, the two men are still mourned in the village.

In old Japan, village associations defended the interests of the villagers against landlords and tax collectors, and they still perform many of the duties the local government performs in other countries. The mechanics are simple. A folder is passed from mailbox to mailbox informing each household of the days chosen for putting out garbage, street-weeding, snow-clearing, and similar common chores. One person from each household attends occasional meetings in the home of the headman, at which simple refreshments are served by his wife and daughters. Votes are seldom, if ever, called—the Japanese worry that the losing side might feel excluded, and believe that, with tact and patience, everyone can be brought to share a carefully crafted consensus. For example, when the association installs street lights, it carefully determines which houses will be closest to the lights, and those houses pay the most for them. By such means, taking into consideration the weather, the farming cycle, and families' particular schedules, Sonobe's village association chose the date, the venue, and the menu for its summer festival.

The report that the lethal agent at the festival supper was potassium cyanide produced what the *Mainichi* newspaper called "an indescribable feeling of anger and terror" throughout Japan. Cyanide, a powerful poison with no domestic uses, is tightly controlled in Japan, as it is in most countries. Ac-



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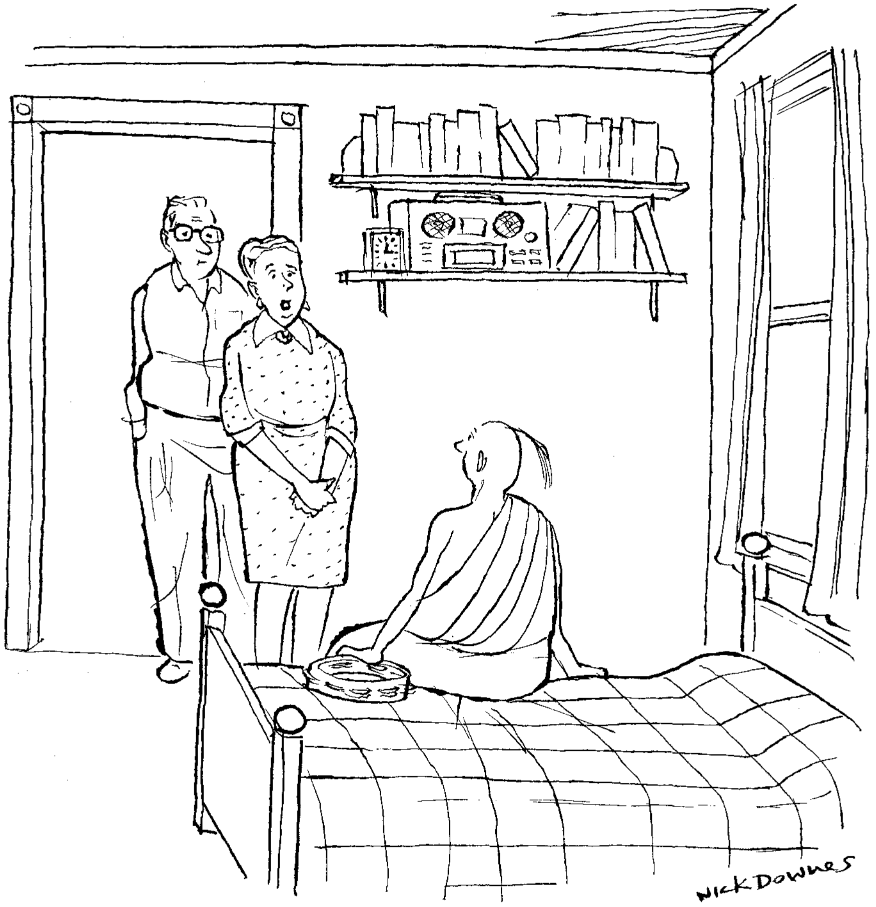
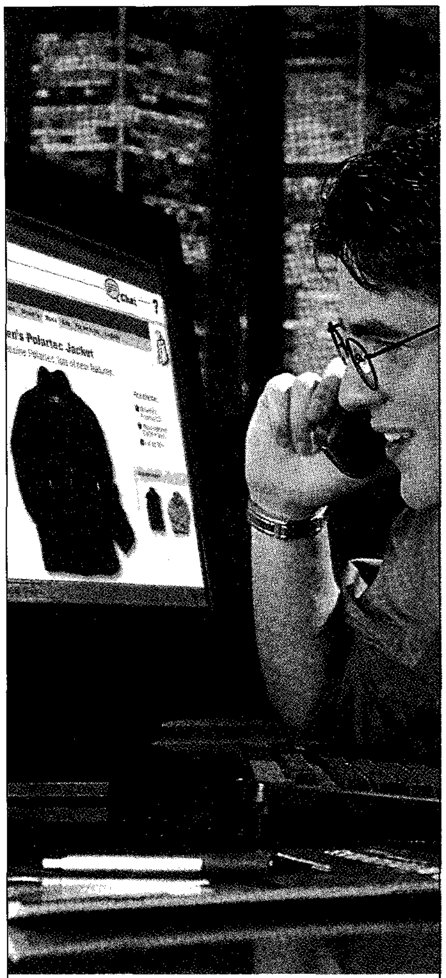


"Your father and I just want you to know that we're behind you one hundred per cent should you decide to go back to being a dope addict."

cording to the police, the random way in which the curry was served made it unlikely that any particular officeholder or villager could have been targeted. The *Mainichi* said it feared the arrival of "a new breed of criminals," adding that "our entire society is at risk."

News footage emphasized the smallness and the isolation of Sonobe, confirming fears that the unknown poisoner must have been a guest at the festival. Broadcasts of rituals mourning the deaths of the two children, with shots of empty desks heaped with flowers, black-ribboned photographs, and a schoolbag that would never again see school, horrified viewers. In apparent copycat poisonings, there were reports of strange-tasting sandwiches bought in convenience stores, and of holes pierced, and then resealed, in the bottoms of cans of tea. One death, by cyanide poisoning, was confirmed. In Yamagata, a youth group hired uniformed guards—not armed guards (Japan is still virtually free of guns), but guards nonetheless—to watch their festival cooking pot. In the small village where I live, sixty miles west of Tokyo, curry was hastily removed from our summer-festival menu and *yaki soba*, pan-fried noodles—which were thought to be harder to poison because they are cooked as the diners watch—were served instead.

A week after the festival, the Wakayama police announced that the poison had not been cyanide but arsenic, which is also tightly controlled in Japan but more readily available. The new diagnosis, later confirmed, raised other questions that have not yet been satisfactorily answered. If the aim of the unknown poisoner was mass murder, then arsenic was the wrong poison to use. Arsenic trioxide, which was found both in the victims' vomit and in the uneaten curry, is a tasteless, odorless, colorless crystalline powder widely used in Japanese insecticides. A large dose creates immediate symptoms like vom-



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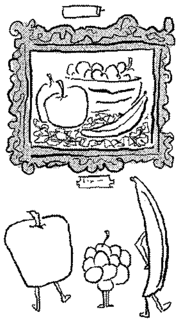
iting and a burning sensation in the throat, but it is not reliably lethal; almost half a pound of arsenic powder was added to the Sonobe curry, but only four people died, and they might have survived if the poisoning had been diagnosed more quickly. Arsenic, moreover, lingers in the victim's hair and nails, where it is easily identified by spectral analysis.



The discovery of arsenic deepened the mystery of a motive, but it also pointed to a suspect. Kenji Hayashi had often spoken to neighbors about his days as a termite exterminator, and no one else in the village had any known access to arsenic, much less a reason for using it. The Hayashis' home is no more than fifty paces from the festival site. Masumi had watched over the pots, and neither she, nor Kenji, nor their children ate any curry—in fact, no one could remember seeing any member of the family after the festival began. The couple's mysterious finances, Kenji's freewheeling habits, and Masumi's extravagances fed village suspicion, which was soon communicated to the hundred and fifty police and the two hundred journalists who descended on Sonobe. The inquisitive throng eventually grew to thirty-nine thousand five hundred police and five hundred reporters working on the investigation, which lasted for more than five months and continually dominated the Japanese news media.

The story was reported heavily, but not very coherently. This was partly due to the inexperience of the police and the media: high-profile murder investigations are rare in Japan, which has the lowest homicide rate of any major industrialized country. Most of the early reporting was based on gossip and unsupported accusations against a nameless "Sonobe family," which was, of course, the Hayashis. This family allegedly ran a house of horrors where Sonobe residents, relatives, and casual visitors regularly fell ill after meals and died, whereupon huge insurance payments were reportedly made to the family. (It is not unusual to insure friends or, particularly, colleagues, in Japan, where many companies consider themselves a family of workers.) The sums mentioned came to more than forty million dollars. A nameless husband and wife appeared on television, with their faces digitally masked and their voices electronically altered, to deny everything. The Japanese wondered why no arrest had been made, but the police, sources said, were not connecting this alleged outbreak of poisoning for profit with the deaths at the summer festival, which, considering Sonobe's small size, was hard to believe.

A careful reading—not a strength of the Japanese media—revealed several gaps in this version of events. None of the people the Hayashis insured had died, none of them had lived in Sonobe, and none had attended, or had been expected to attend, the fateful festival. Whatever the motive for the poisoning, it could not have been to get rich.

The investigation did, however, uncover the source of the Hayashis' wealth. Kenji, it emerged, had exagger-

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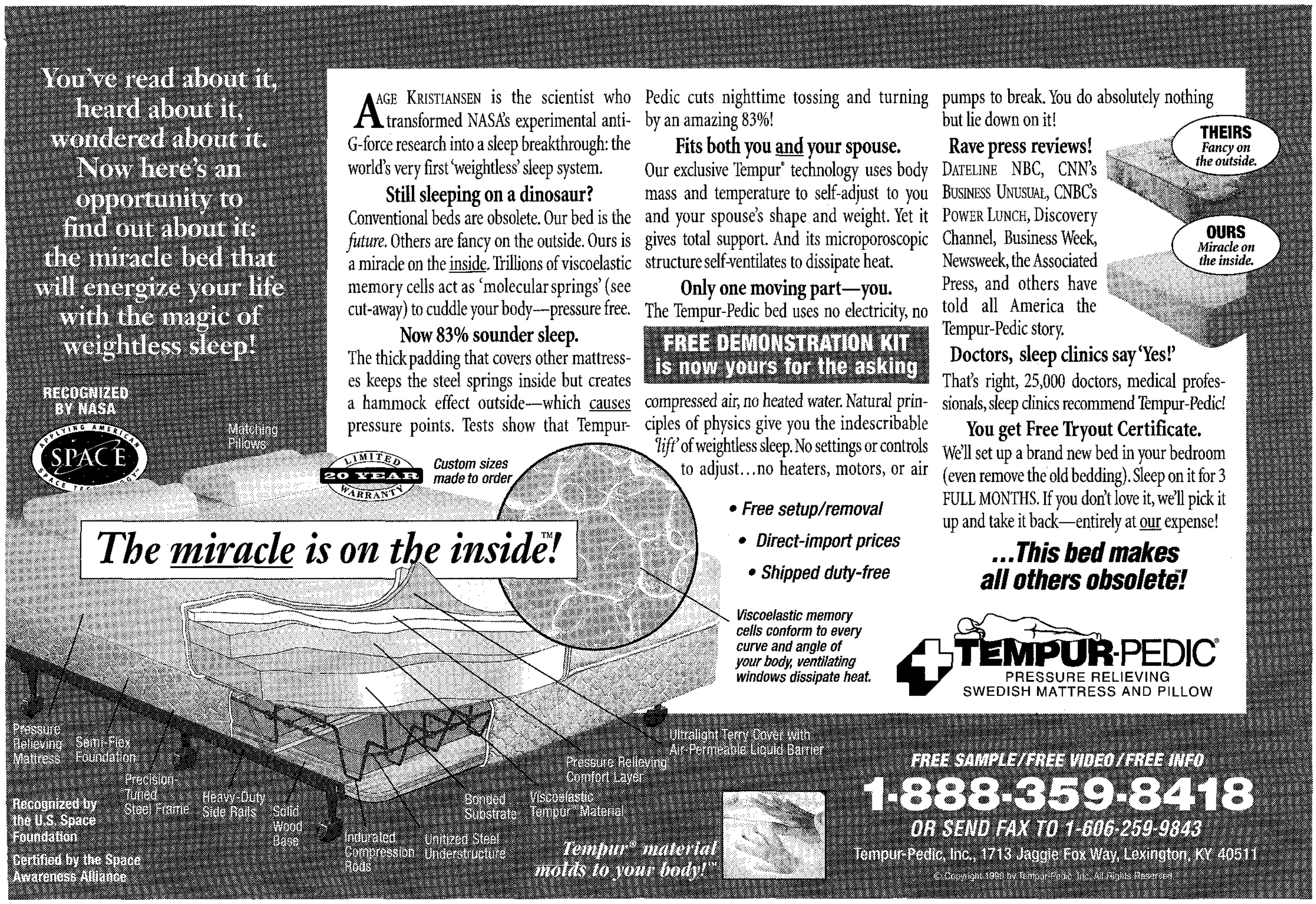
ated his disability in order to continue collecting insurance payments, which are alleged to amount to half a million dollars over a decade; Masumi had misreported the site of her scalding accident—by stating that it happened while she was riding a bike, she qualified for a high-paying "traffic accident" claim—as well as its severity. That money, along with Kenji's mah-jongg winnings and the money Masumi received upon the unsuspicious death of her mother, accounts reasonably well for the couple's luxurious circumstances.

This, in turn, raised another question: how could the insurance companies have been so negligent in paying the Hayashis' claims? There has been much tut-tutting in the Japanese media about the carelessness with which Japanese insurance companies accept policies and claims, often without requiring a physical examination. Japan's life-insurance industry is by far the wealthiest in the world—the average person pays more than three thousand dollars a year on premiums, three times the American level—but Japan's depressed economy has cut deeply into the companies' investment returns, and they have been under pressure to sell ever more policies. The companies that issued policies to the Hayashis have not commented, except to plead "special circumstances."

FINALLY, at 6:05 A.M., on October 4, 1998, two months after the festival deaths, thirty police, closely trailed by five hundred journalists, a hundred riot police to keep order among the journalists and early-rising bystanders, and ten police and media helicopters, arrived in Sonobe to arrest the Hayashis. Both were charged with insurance fraud, and Masumi with a single count of attempted murder by arsenic poisoning of thirty-five-year-old Katsunori Izumi, who had dined at the Hayashi house one evening in 1997, played mah-jongg, and, while riding his motorcycle home at three o'clock the following morning, become ill, and skidded off the road. "Traces" of arsenic were allegedly found in his nails and hair. Masumi, who denies poisoning anyone, later asserted that Izumi had only become ill because he had cooked and eaten five servings of out-of-date canned beef stew during the game. The *Mainichi* cautioned that "we must exercise restraint and not jump to conclusions about the Hayashis' involvement" in the festival poisoning, but that is exactly what most Japanese did.

After the couple were arrested, the tape of the Hayashis' interview was at last aired unmasked and unmuffled, but this only added to the confusion. Television viewers expected to meet an ogress, an Eastern sister of Lucrezia Borgia. Instead, we saw a chubby, bubbly woman in a comic T-shirt, who chuckled in a warm contralto as she affectionately joked with her husband, and washed the family BMW. Were we being taken in by the polished likability of a master saleswoman? The art of a natural actress? Or, perhaps, the inner serenity of innocence? This interview, the only one the Hayashis have been allowed to give, has been aired so often that no one can any longer be sure. Two lines stand out in



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memory: from her, "We have done nothing illegal"; and from him, "I trust her."

ONE prominent Japanese cheerfully welcomed the arrests. "I have the impression that we have passed a major hurdle in the case," Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi told a crowded press conference on the day the Hayashis were taken into custody. The intervention of the chief executive in an unfinished investigation would be seen in any common-law jurisdiction as political interference, and thus a gift for the defense. The Japanese, however, have learned to treat an arrest as a conviction. In 1997, the last year of full record, sixty-six thousand nine hundred and five serious criminal cases came before Japanese courts, in which sixty-one thousand seven hundred and twenty-nine defendants, or 92.3 per cent, confessed—a record that has only been matched, if ever, in totalitarian states. As a consequence, Japan has very few trial lawyers—proportionately a twentieth as many as the United States—and Japanese judges have the mostly technical task of checking that confessions have been correctly obtained. (Of those who pleaded innocent, only sixty-seven—one in a thousand of those accused—have been acquitted.) Japanese law allows suspects to be held in isolation cells for up to twenty-three days, a period that can be extended by court order, and suspects have no right to a lawyer while being questioned. The real trials therefore take place in police stations.

Japanese bar associations and human-rights monitors like Amnesty International have frequently criticized the methods of the police interrogators, which are based on the same traditional social engineering that lies behind the friendly coercion of the village associations, and which use much the same sanction—the threat of exclusion from the community. Masumi appeared in court a month after her arrest, complaining of her interrogators' approach. "They slapped my face more than twenty times with pictures of my children, yelling at me that I should admit I kept arsenic at my home," she told Judge Katsuko Montani, who extended her custody on the ground that she might flee or destroy evidence.

Plea bargaining is unknown in Japan, but an equivalent is widely used: suspects are told that a confession may

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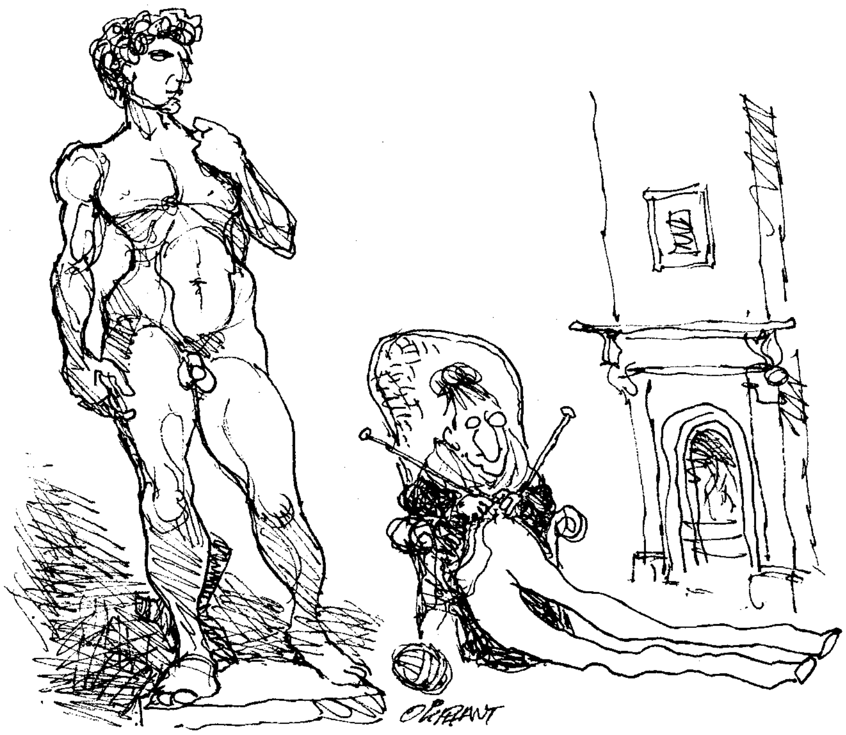

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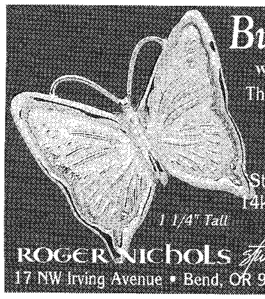

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bring a more favorable sentence; a contrite offender might even eventually be readmitted to the national family. The statistics show that this approach usually works in Japan, where proclaiming the rights of the individual is regularly denounced as selfishness. There is, of course, a danger that the innocent will be persuaded to confess. Japanese law does allow new trials, and in recent decades some twenty convictions for serious crimes have been overturned, with compensation paid to defendants at a fixed rate of a hundred dollars per day of incarceration. But Masumi refused to confess, which to many Japanese only confirmed her rejection of community values. Her interrogators were baffled. "I have seen many suspects," one of them told the Kyodo News Agency, "but I've never met one like her."

Without a confession, and under increasing political pressure to solve the festival poisoning, the police resumed their investigation. (During this period, forty-seven-year-old Tsunehiro Murai, the Wakayama police inspector in charge of the case, died in what was officially judged to have been a case of overwork.) Within a week after the arrests, according to the *Daily Yomiuri* newspaper, the police had collected more than a thousand samples from in and around the Hayashi house. A month of laboratory work reportedly turned up minute traces of arsenic from three locations: in the irrigation ditch alongside the house, in the drain connecting the house to the ditch, and in a corner of an empty plastic container that had been used to store spice packets, which was found under the kitchen sink. These findings were at best ambiguous; tiny quantities of arsenic could conceivably have been carried over from Kenji's exterminating business.

As weeks went by, the media continued its unsubstantiated reporting. Masumi, it was said, had a lover, described as a doctor, a businessman, or an old school friend, whom she had been seeing on her trips to Wakayama City. She had suffered a miscarriage in jail. She had put a deposit on a three-bedroom penthouse overlooking the Ki River without telling her husband. She had once advised an unnamed colleague at her insurance job to insure her own

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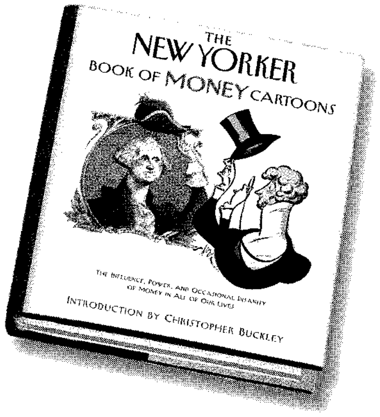
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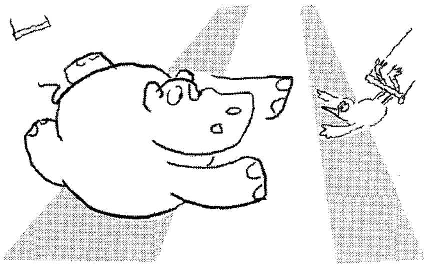
husband and then poison him. She had told a neighbor that she had tried to kill Kenji with poison, but failed. Japanese law has no rule against hearsay, and judges are allowed to make a "free evaluation" of any kind of evidence, however tainted; but these stories suggested either that the investigators were desperate for something to tell the media or that they were trying to break the solidarity of the Hayashis—who had by this time acquired a high-profile lawyer, Kyoji Izutani, who began leaking counter-stories of his own.



THE breakthrough in the festival-poisoning case came on December 26th, when Dr. Izumi Nakai, a professor of applied chemistry at Tokyo Science University, announced his findings on nine samples containing traces of arsenic: three collected from the summer-festival site, one from the spice-packet container in the Hayashi kitchen, and five from Kenji's retired supply of insecticide, which he had years earlier given to a relative of Masumi's (her brother, by one report), who had, in turn, voluntarily given it to the investigators, in a rusty and apparently long-undisturbed drum. Dr. Nakai established that all nine samples had a similar pattern of impurities, strongly suggesting a common origin, probably a factory in China. The empty spice-packet container seemed to tie the deaths to the Hayashi house, if not necessarily to any of its inhabitants. (It is not clear how much of the arsenic in Japan can be traced to a common source.) Three days later, on December 29th, Masumi and Kenji were indicted, Kenji on charges of insurance fraud, Masumi on similar fraud charges, plus four counts of murder at the summer festival, more than sixty counts of attempted murder at the festival, the attempted murder of Katsunori Izumi, the motorcycling mah-jongg player, and—in the most astonishing twist of a

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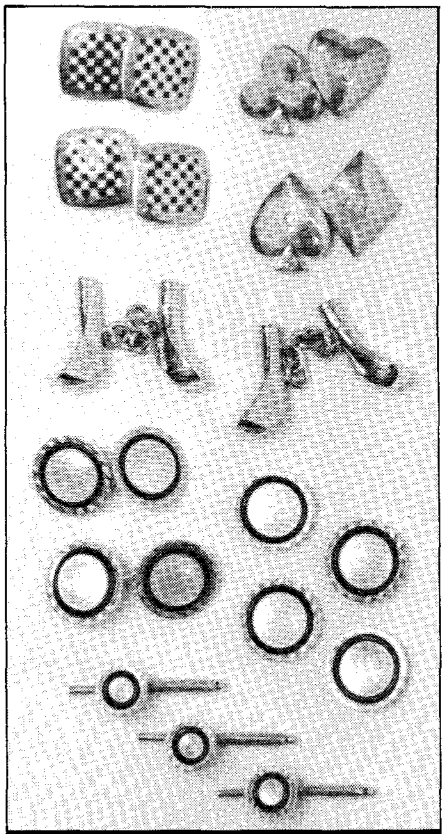

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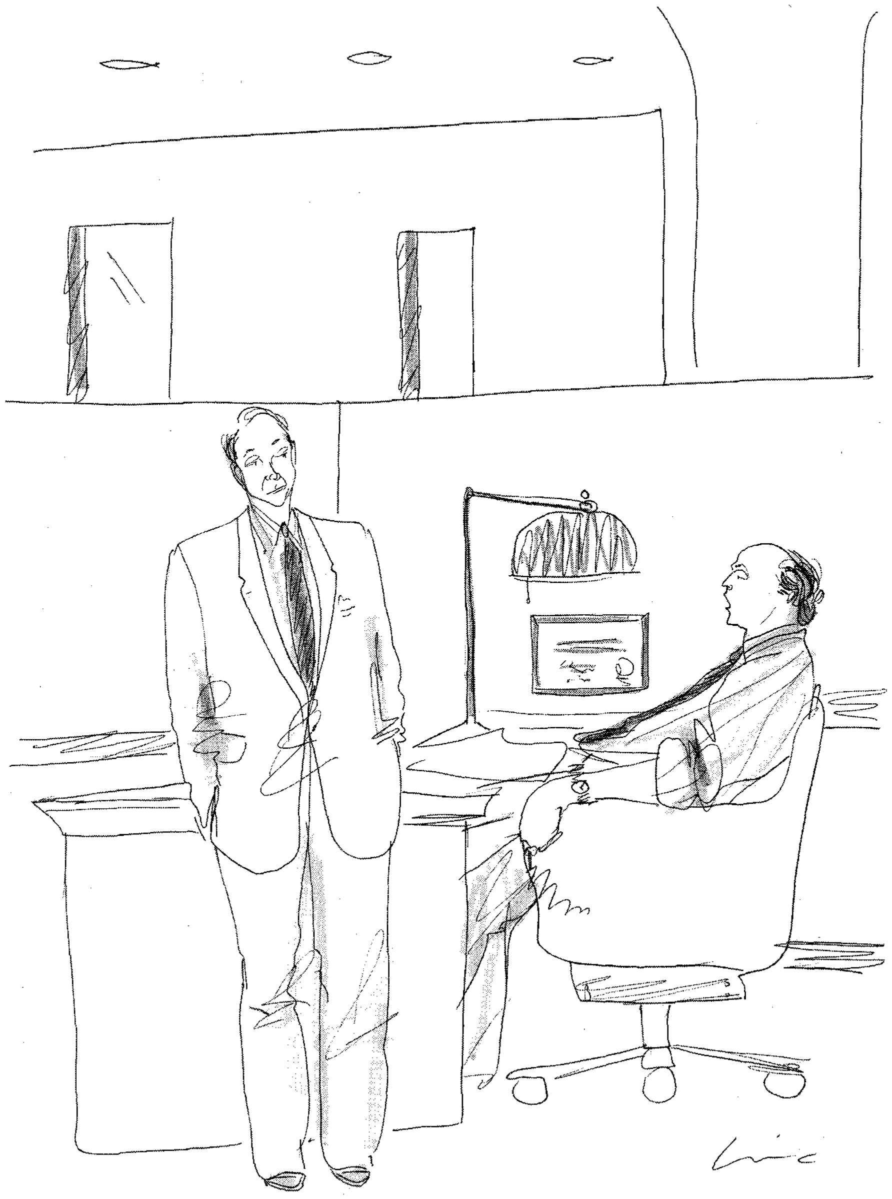
bizarre story—the attempted murder by arsenic poisoning of Kenji, her trusting husband.

THE Hayashi trial opened on May 13th of this year in an atmosphere remarkably like that of a lynching. "Hang the witch!" loudspeakers bellowed from buses driven by the Great Japan Patriotic League, one of several scruffy ultranationalist outfits that were patrolling outside the Wakayama district courthouse. (Japan reserves hanging for "unusually cruel" crimes; no woman has been hanged in half a century.) Crowds of idlers, a rare sight in Japan, lined the streets hoping to glimpse the Hayashis' arrival, coats draped over their bowed heads, and five thousand people waited in line for forty-five seats in the courtroom. Before a word of evidence had been given, the mother of the dead schoolboy, Hirotaka Hayashi, was allowed to tell the court, "I want her to be executed four times," and observers in the public gallery sobbed as the widow of the village chief, Takatoshi Taninaka, described her husband's painful death. Cameras are barred from Japanese courtrooms, but the nation's most sensational scandal magazine, *Focus*, published a grainy photograph of a handcuffed and half-smiling Masumi being led from the dock by a policewoman. "SHE IS LAUGHING AT THE COURT!" the magazine's headline screamed. Masumi maintained her innocence on the murder charges, but both Hayashis pleaded guilty to insurance fraud, and Kenji is now being tried separately. The couple's



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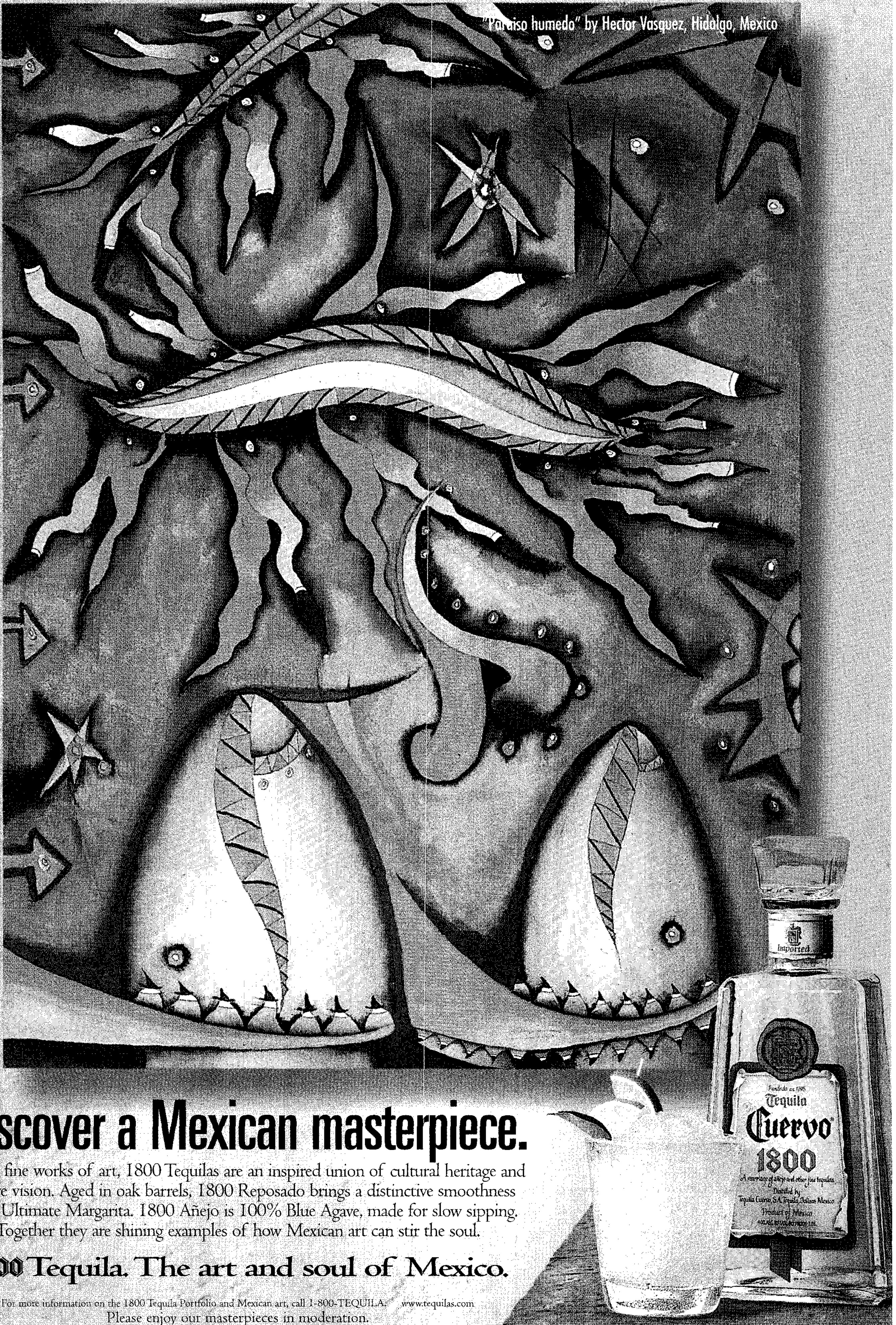
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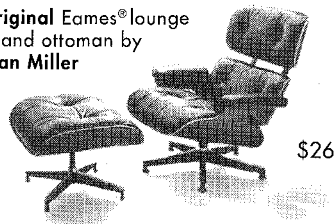

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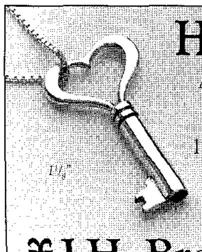

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meeting, in the dock—the first they had been allowed in six months—is likely to be the last time they will see each other for many years.

Kenji, however, refuses to try to reduce his sentence by giving evidence against his wife. (In Japan, anyone may testify against a defendant.) His role in the case remains a puzzle. Masumi is charged with having attempted to murder him by feeding him arsenic, presumably over a long period. Traces of arsenic are said to have been detected in his hair, although it has not been disclosed in what quantity. Can the shrewd gambler really be a deluded husband who failed to notice, and still refuses to believe, that his wife was slowly poisoning him, even as they plotted, prospered, and produced a family together? Did the man who once worked with arsenic every day never wonder why he grew progressively weaker as the years went by and the compensation checks rolled in? Or did he agree to be poisoned to please his wife and keep his family in luxury?

Masumi's lawyer, Kyoji Izutani, has argued that there is no murder without a motive. At the start of the trial, however, the Wakayama prosecutors told the court that they did not need to present a motive, and they focussed instead on what they called the "character and abnormality" of the accused, after the presiding judge accepted that her personality was relevant to the case. Masumi, the prosecutors said, had a "bad temper," which they illustrated with a claim that she had shredded important documents at her insurance company because of "trivial remarks," and had thrown a portable phone at one of her bosses after he warned her about a "sloppy" attitude toward her work. Along with such "preposterous acts" as her alleged horn-honking, late-night piano-playing, and unwillingness to help with the village chores, these were signs, the prosecution said, of a "self-centered" personality, which had alienated her from her neighbors. The prosecution claimed that Masumi arrived late to take her turn watching the pots and was rebuked for it. After that humiliation, the prosecution contended, an enraged Masumi committed her "impulsive criminal act."

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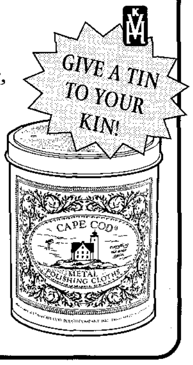

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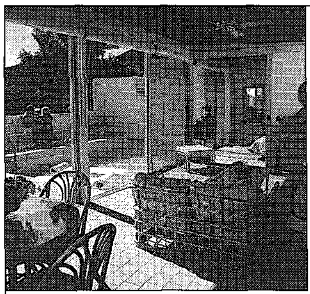

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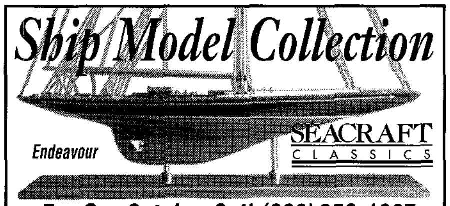

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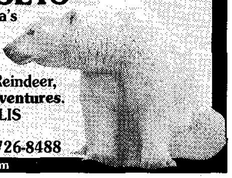

has promised another who will describe having seen her standing in what looked like a cloud of steam—or perhaps of powder—near the curry pots. They say they will also present evidence that Masumi's hair showed traces of arsenic, from when she leaned over the pots to poison the curry.

The defense has argued that the witnesses, "who did not come forward until many weeks after the festival," and then only after two police reconstructions of the scene, are the same people who are supposed to have resented Masumi's "self-centered" conduct, and that their testimony will be inconclusive. They also contend that steam from the poisoned pots could have left traces of arsenic in the hair of any of the women who stirred the curry, although no control tests on any of them have yet been reported. And if Masumi was really susceptible to a moment of insane rage after a trivial put-down, how did she manage to maintain her composure throughout six months of fierce interrogation?

Masumi's lawyers have agreed with the prosecution that the trial can proceed for two days a month, a brisk pace in lawyer-short Japan. Bail is unheard of in murder cases. With hundreds of police reports, insurance policies, witness statements, and the like to be read in court and argued over, the case may take ten years or longer. If Masumi, against all the statistical odds, is acquitted—under the Japanese criminal code, doubts should be resolved in favor of the accused—the prosecution can appeal, repeatedly, as long as a Citizens' Committee for the Review of Prosecutions, the Japanese variant of a grand jury, so recommends, which it almost certainly would in this case. In Osaka, the case of a female schoolteacher accused of killing a mentally handicapped boy has reportedly been dropped after twenty-one years of repeated acquittals, re-arrests, and new trials. But even if Masumi is convicted, it will do little to allay the anger and terror that the poisoning and the subway-gas attack have brought to Japan. Are they isolated acts, the work of deranged people, or signs of a creeping social malaise, a breakdown of community trust? As the prosecution outlined its case, a reassuringly traditional Japanese answer emerged: she is different, she is not one of us. Of this, at least, Masumi Hayashi is unquestionably guilty. ♦

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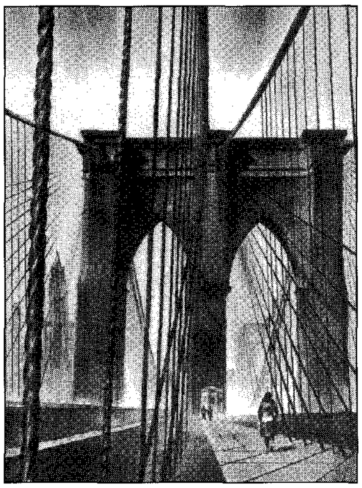

Louis Lozowick. "Brooklyn Bridge."

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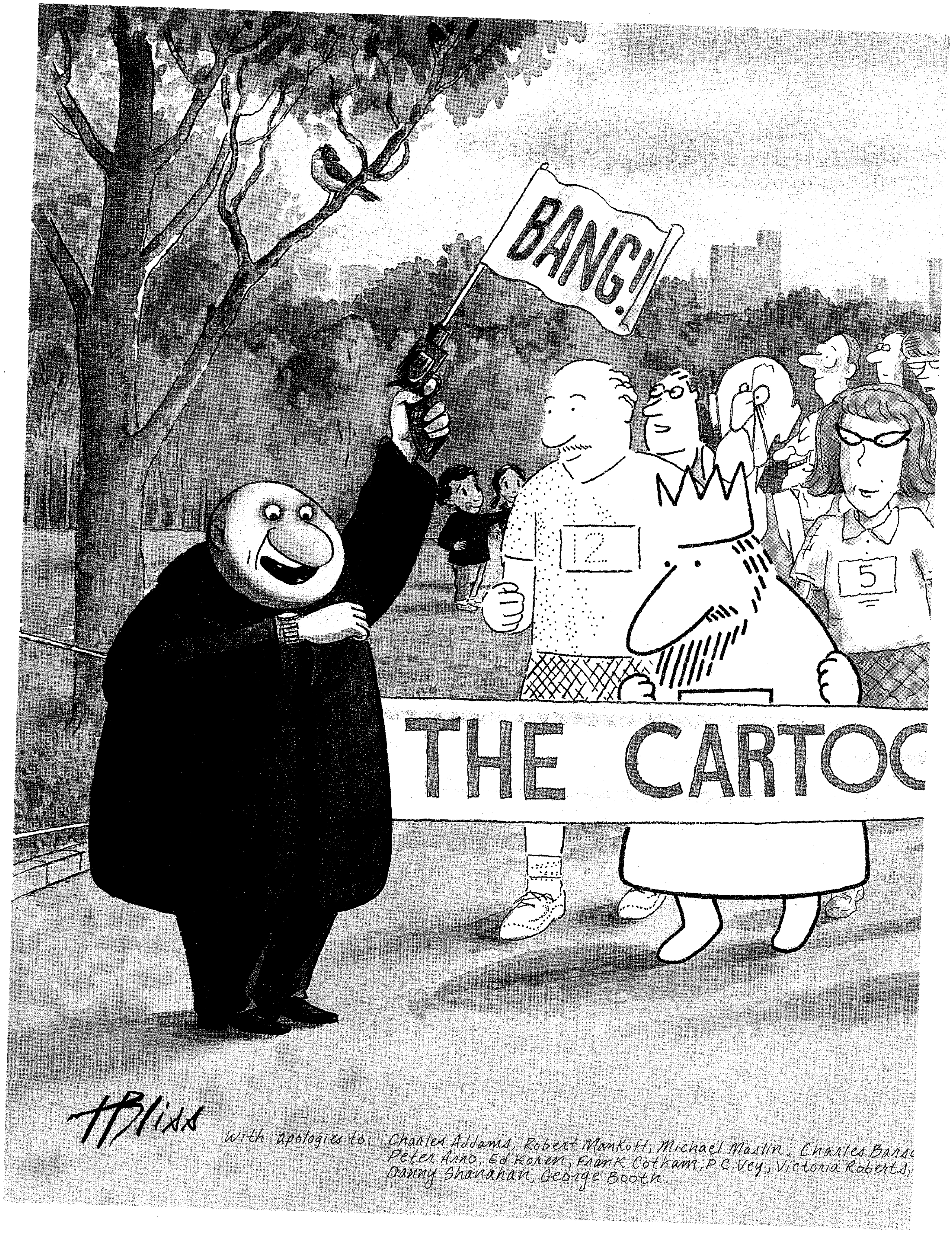
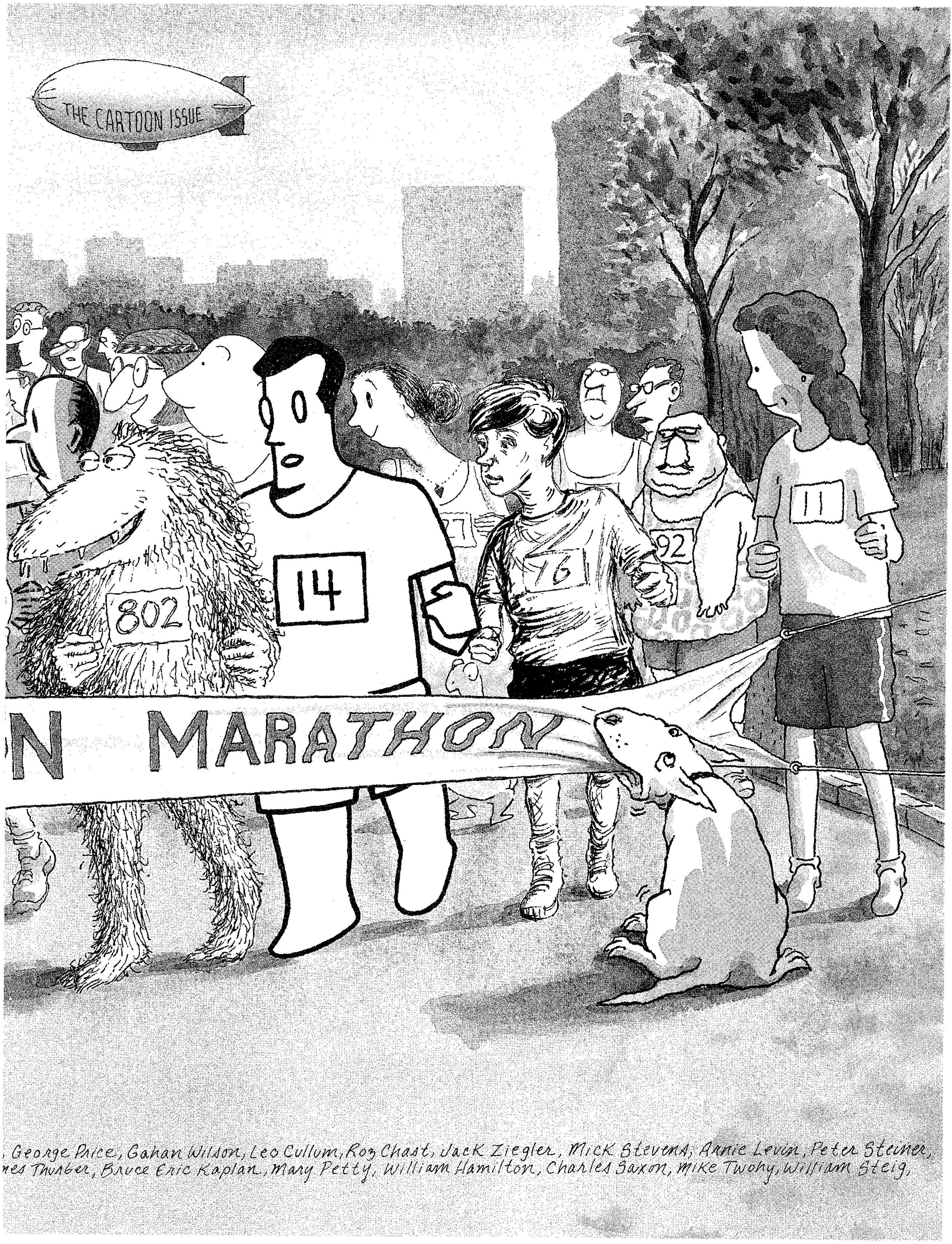
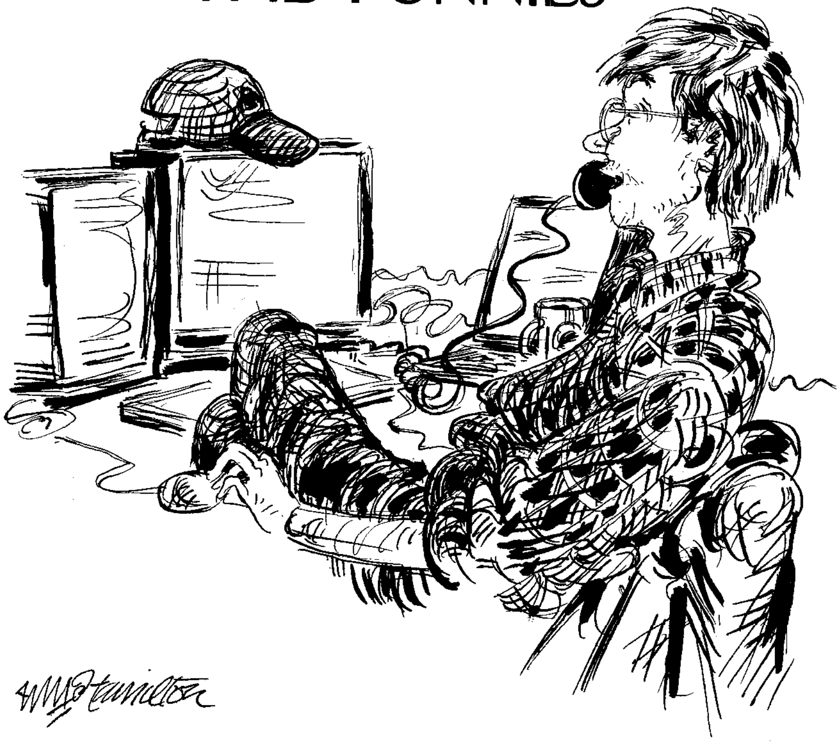

BANG!
12
5
THE CARTOO
HBliss

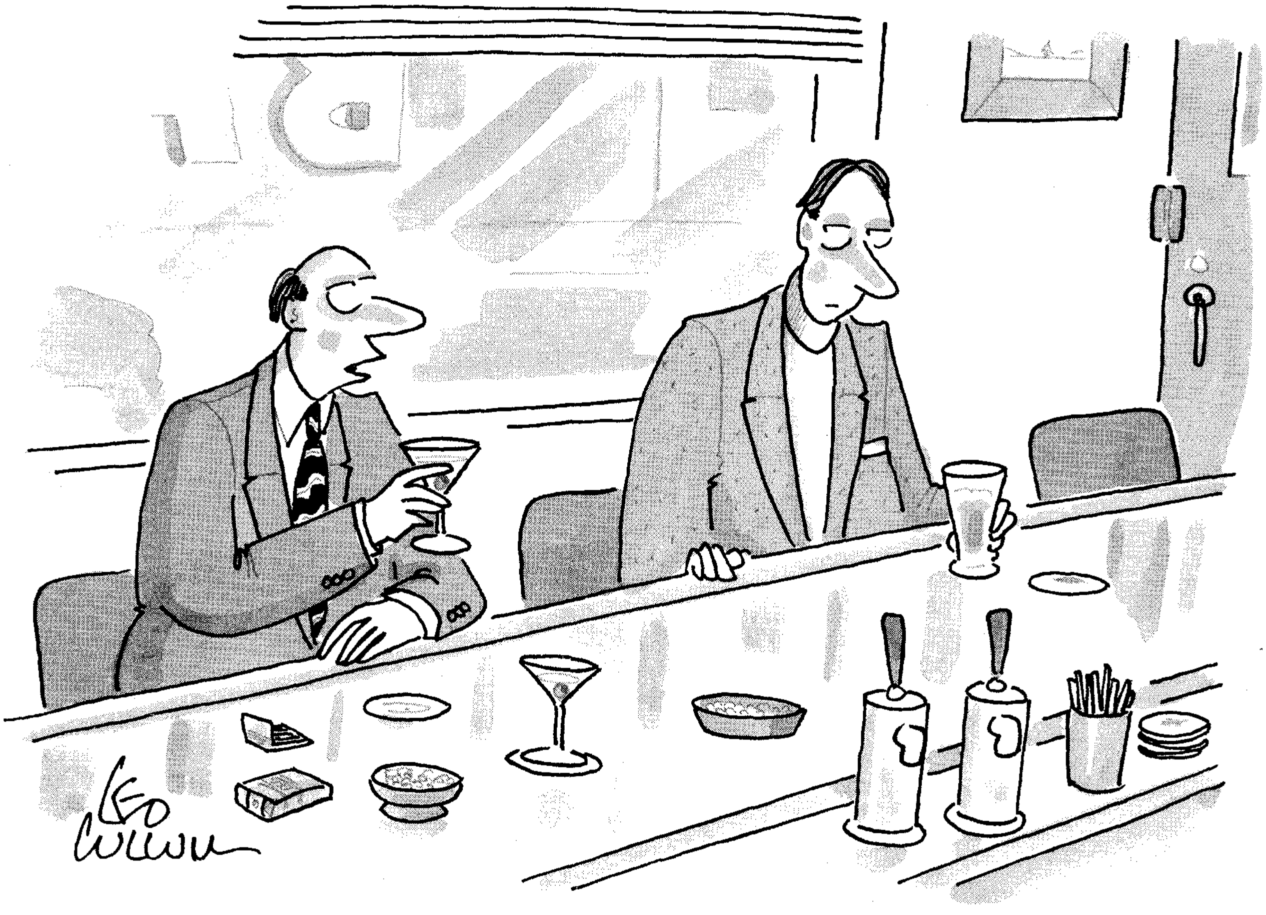
with apologies to: Charles Addams, Robert Mankoff, Michael Maslin, Charles Barsc
Peter Arno, Ed Koren, Frank Cotham, P.C. Vey, Victoria Roberts,
Danny Shanahan, George Booth.


THE CARTOON ISSUE
802
14
76
92
11
N MARATHON
, George Price, Gahan Wilson, Leo Cullum, Roz Chast, Jack Ziegler, Mick Stevens, Arnie Levin, Peter Steiner,
nes Thurber, Bruce Eric Kaplan, Mary Petty, William Hamilton, Charles Saxon, Mike Twohy, William Steig,

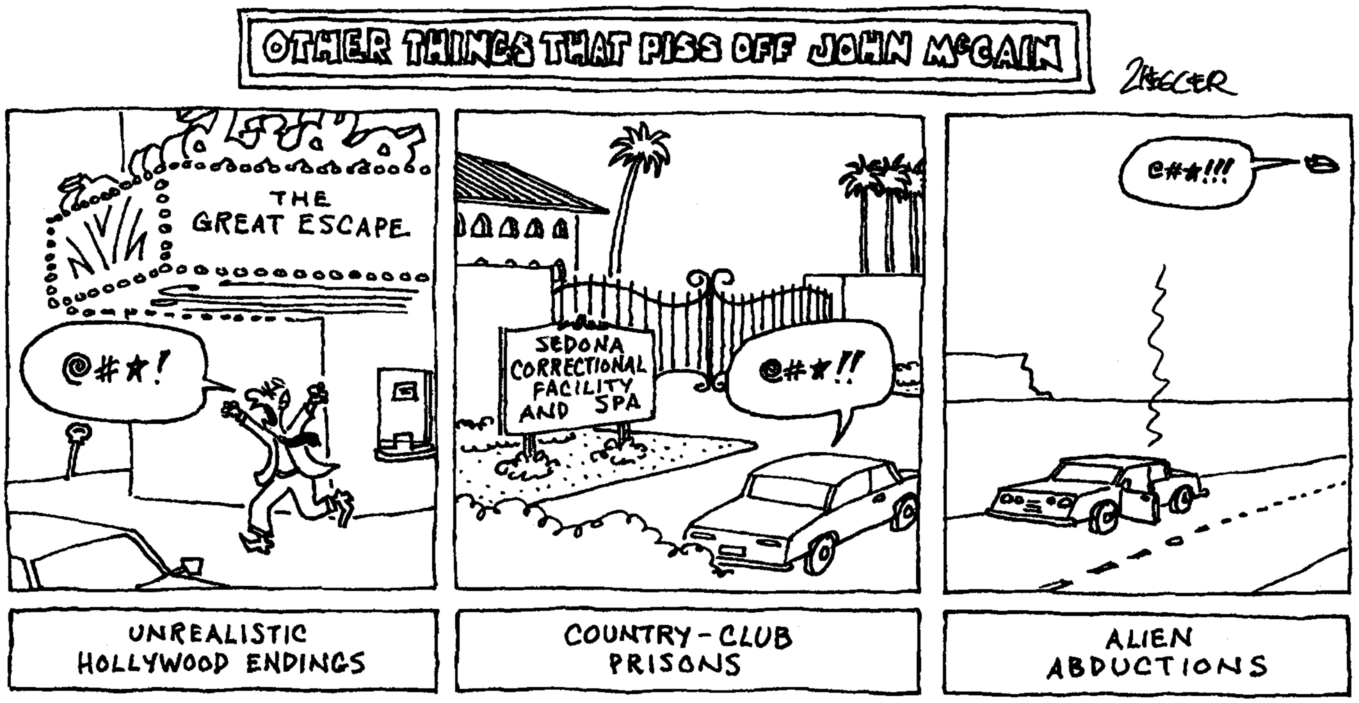
THE FUNNIES



"Mom, I am not a billionaire! A billion is like a thousand million. I'm worth a hundred million. A hundred million is just a hundred million."



"Actually, right now I'm in retox."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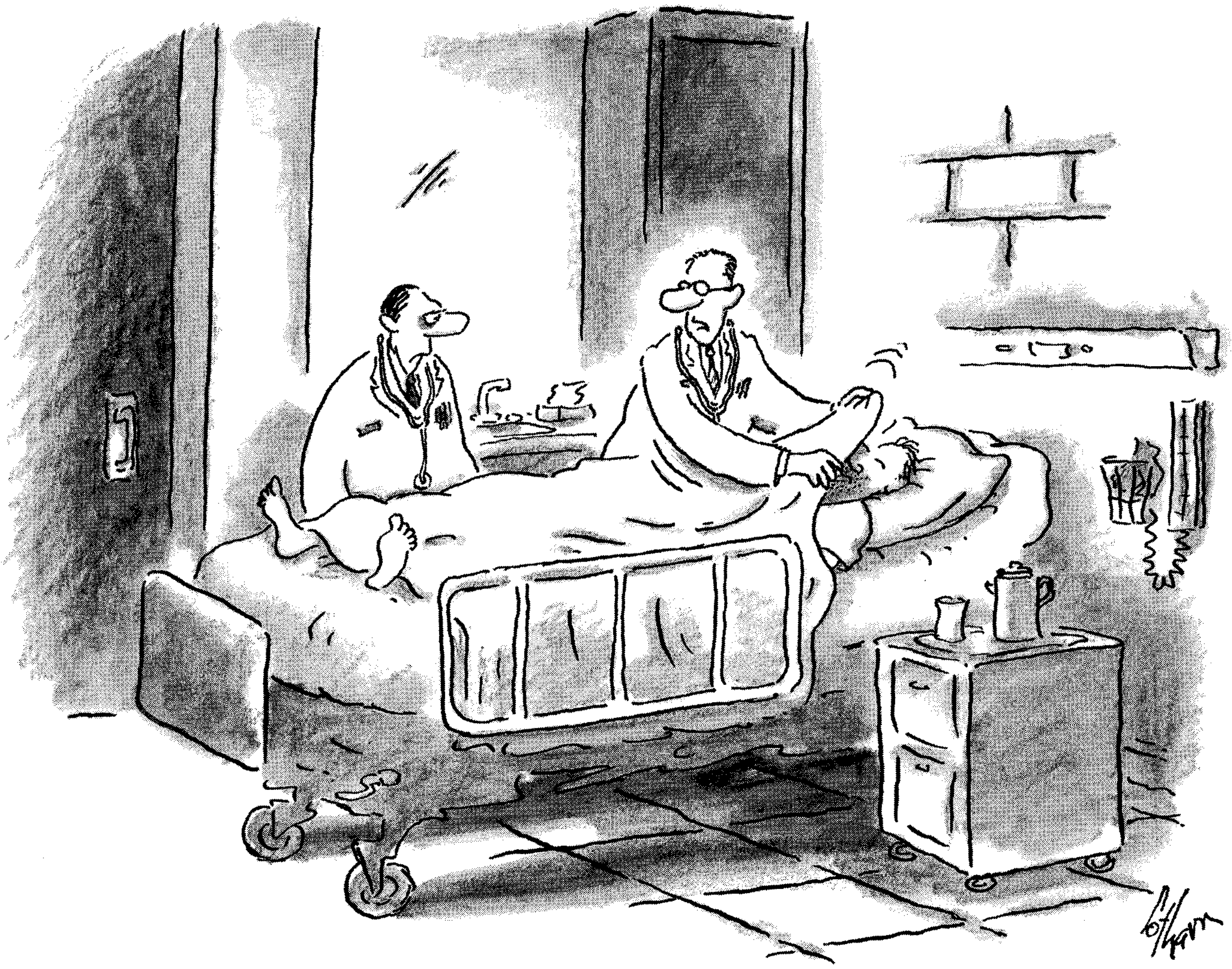
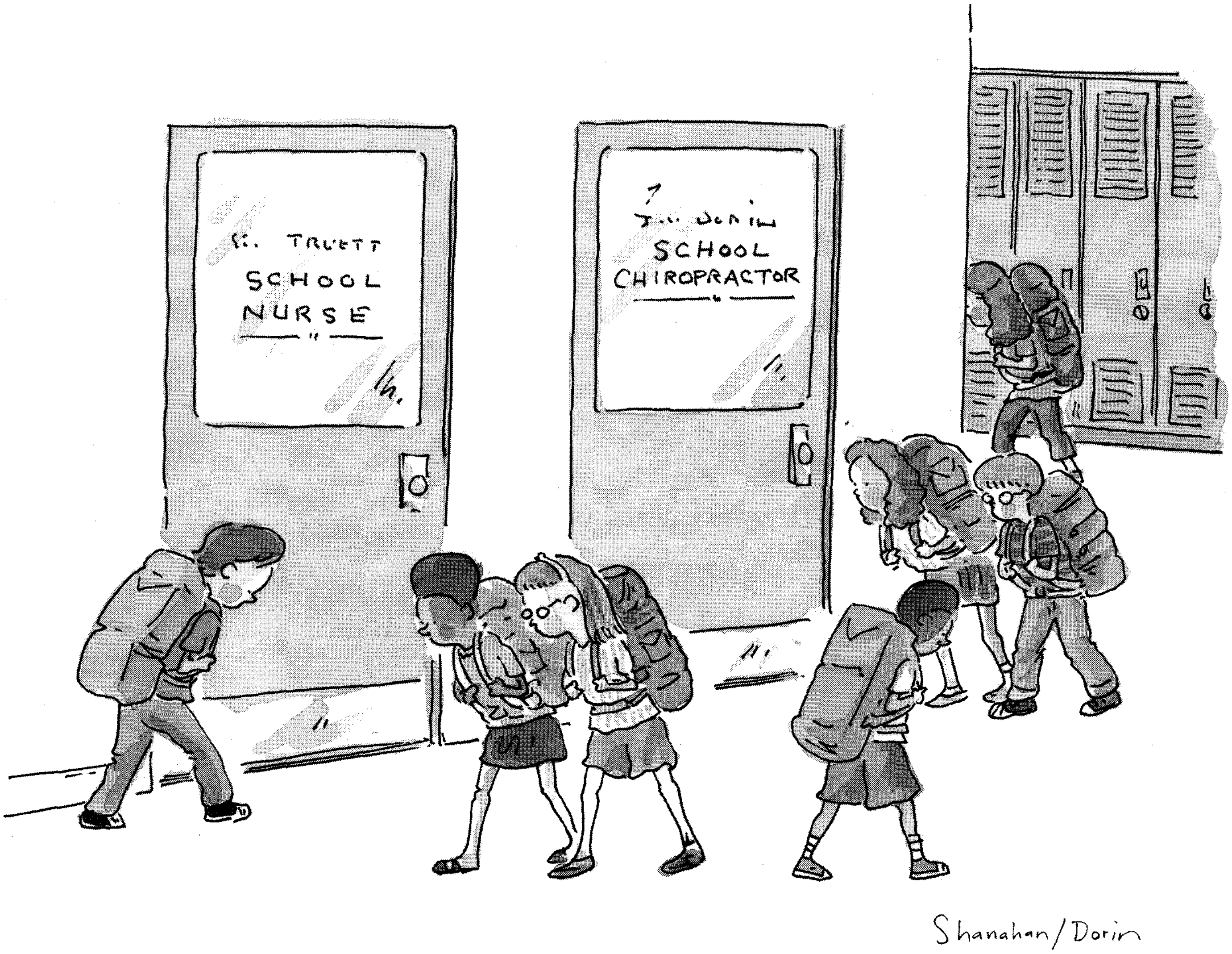


"Shows you how much I know."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NURSE
SCHOOL
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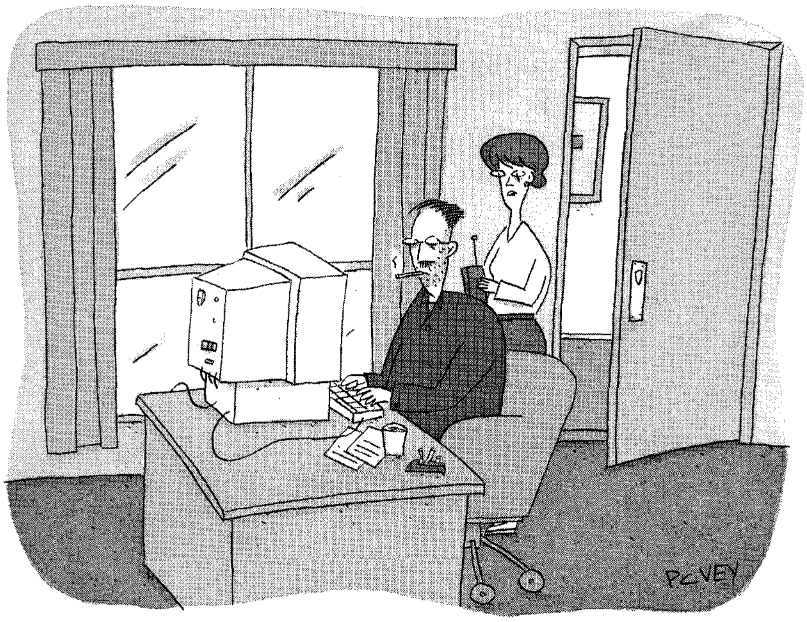
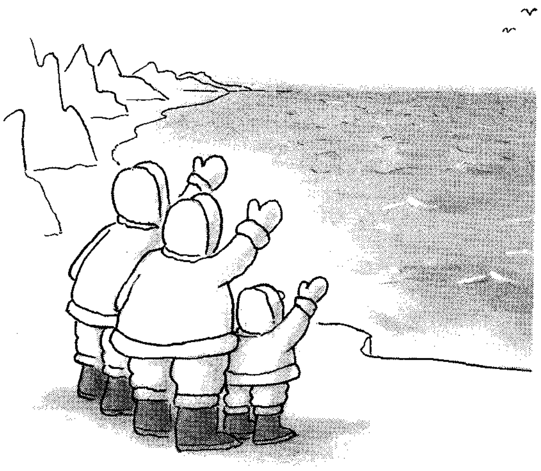
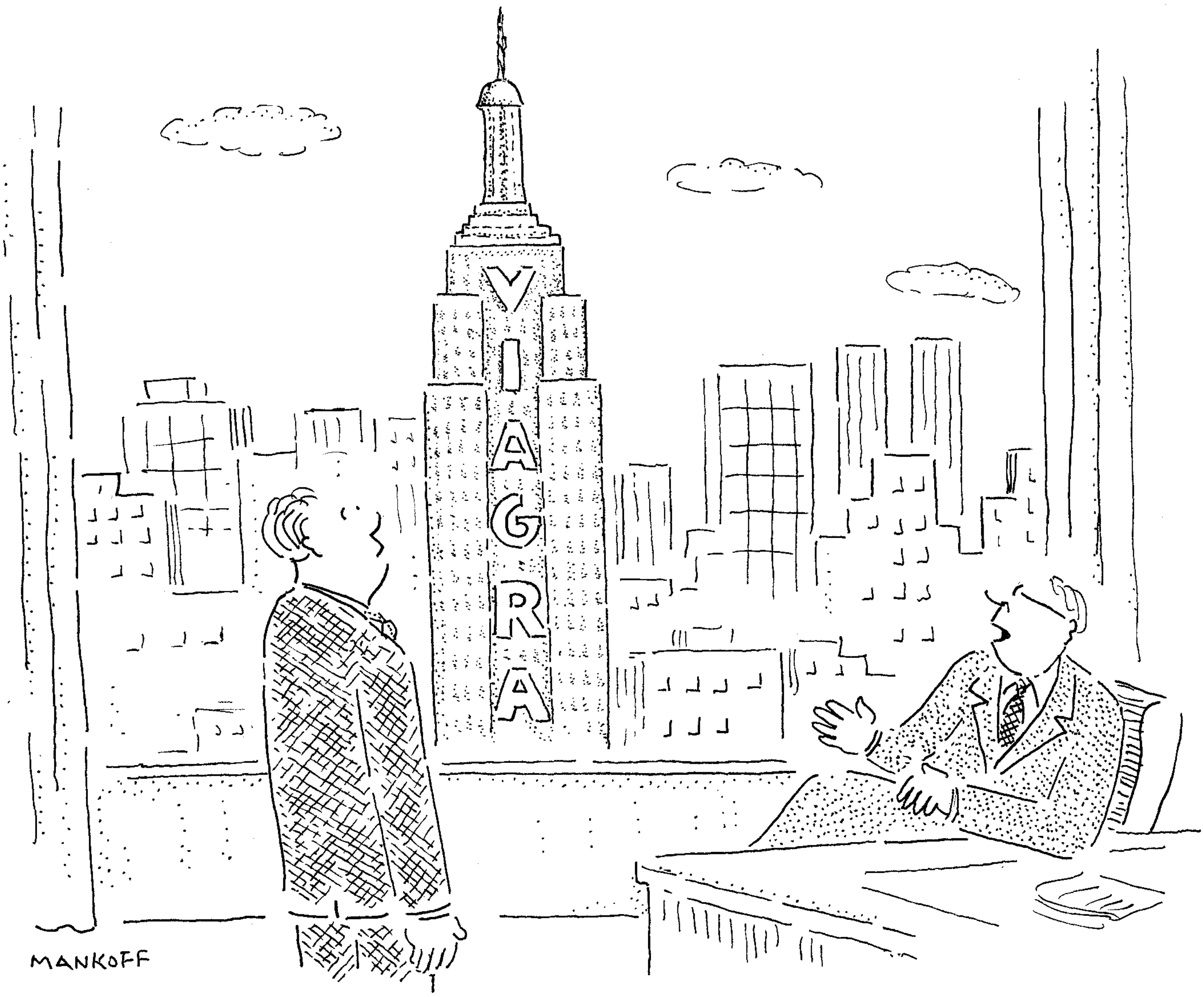


"Your editor wants to know if you have enough flexibility to just give up."



"Are you sure this ice floe is going to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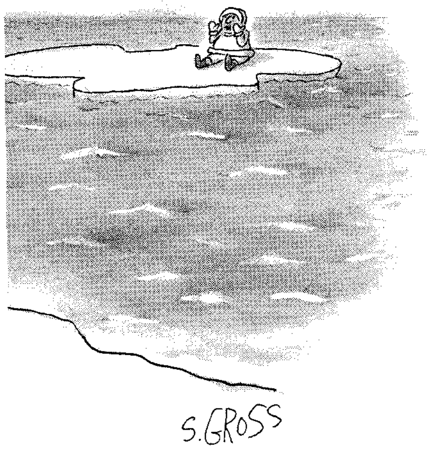
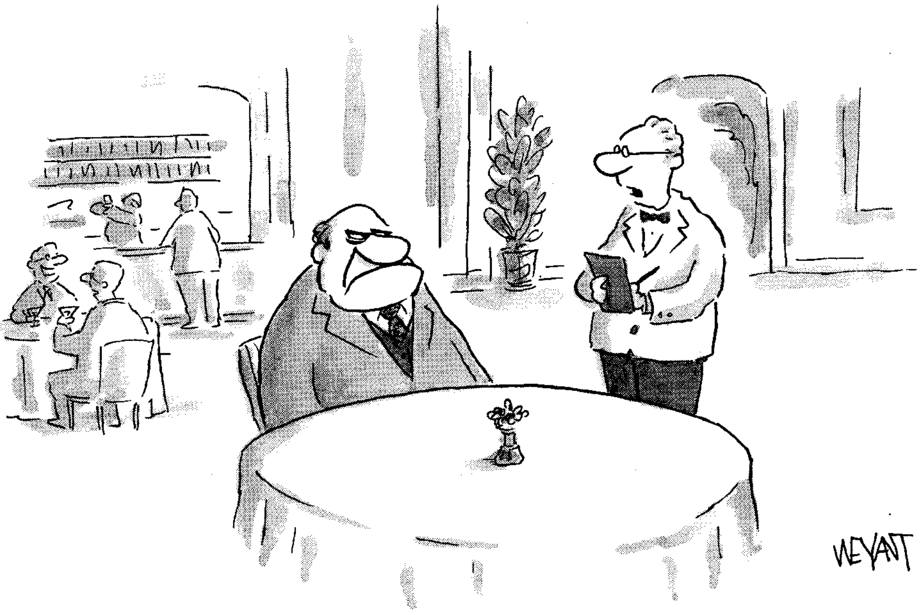
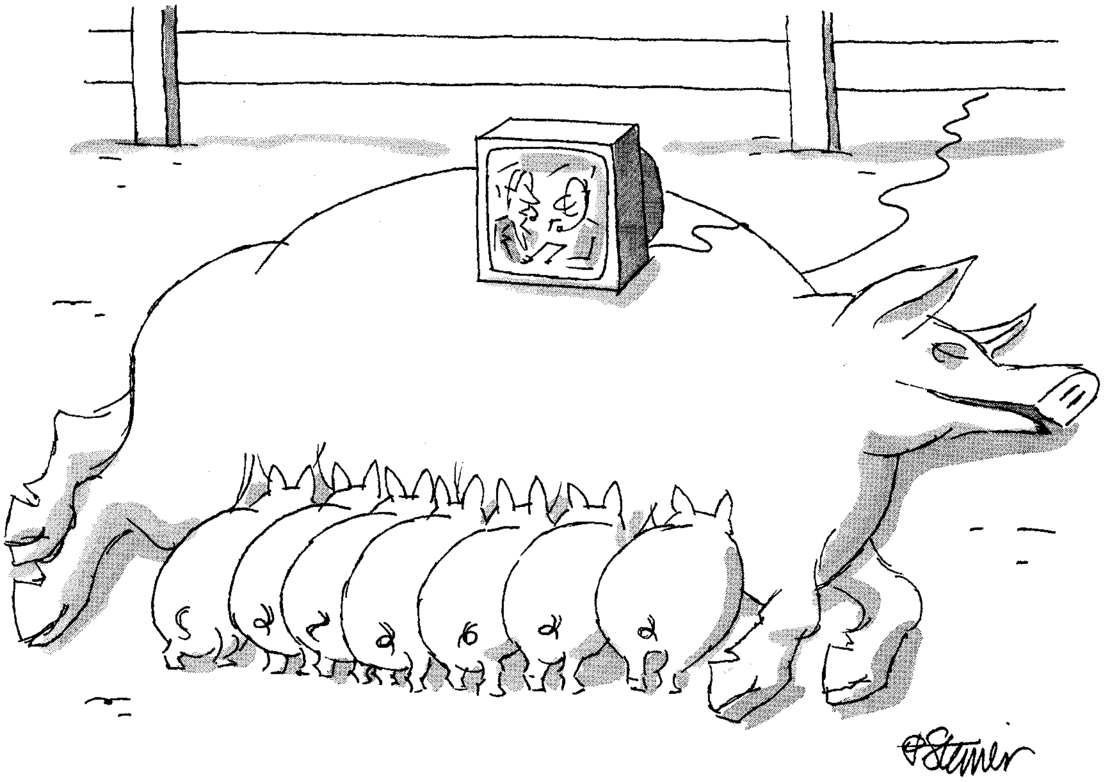
"Now, that's product placement!"

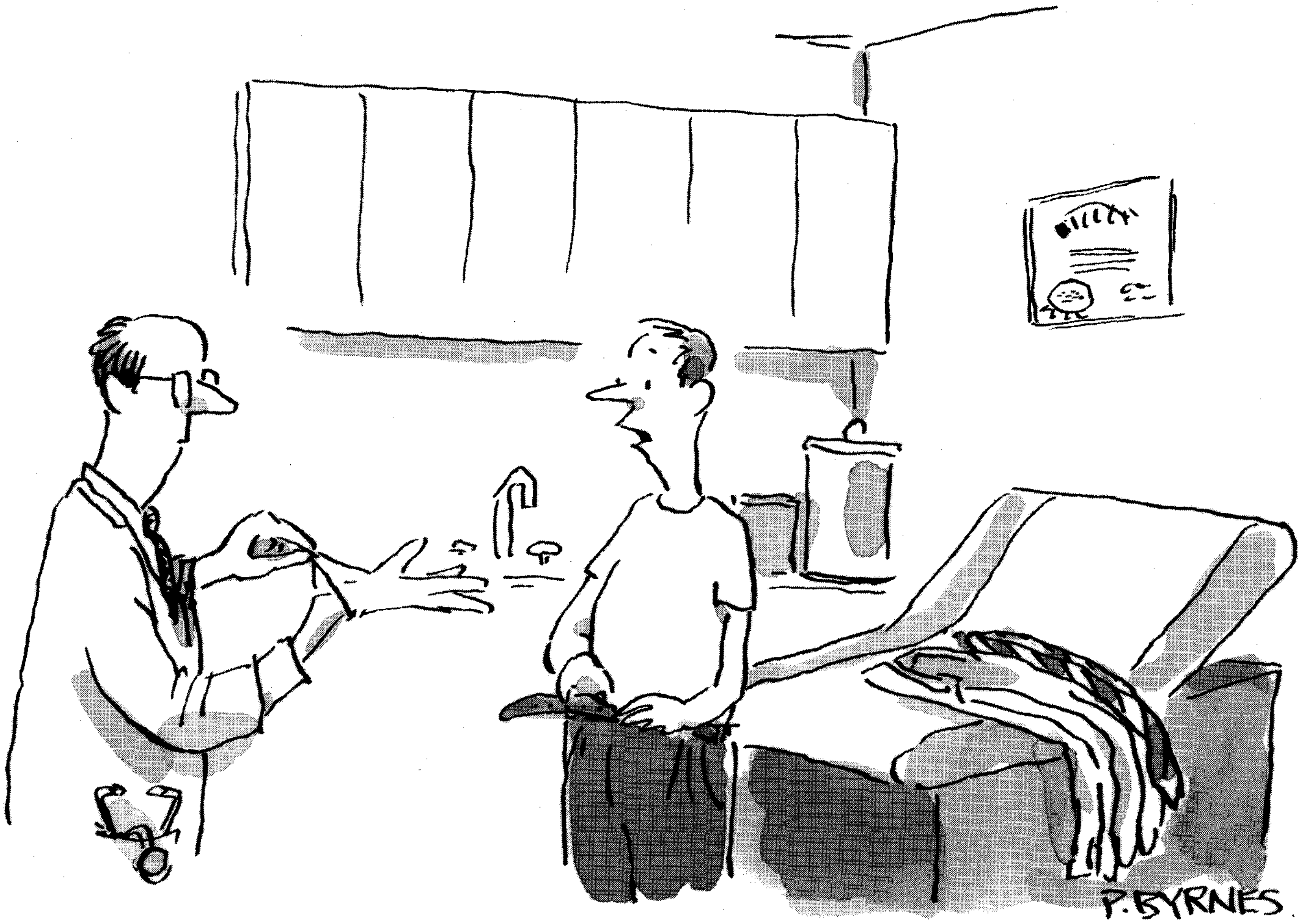


pass by the nursing home?"

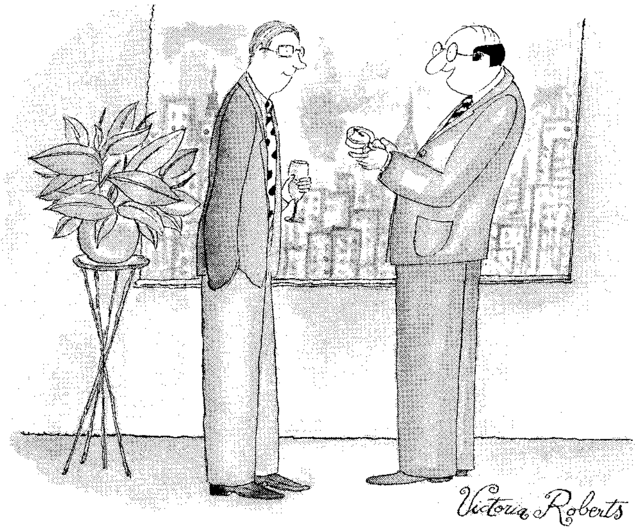


"Would the gentleman prefer an antidepressant?"

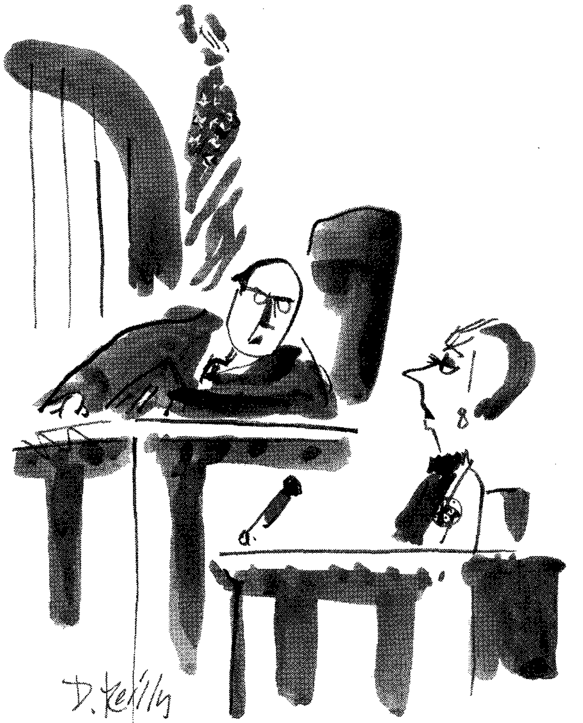




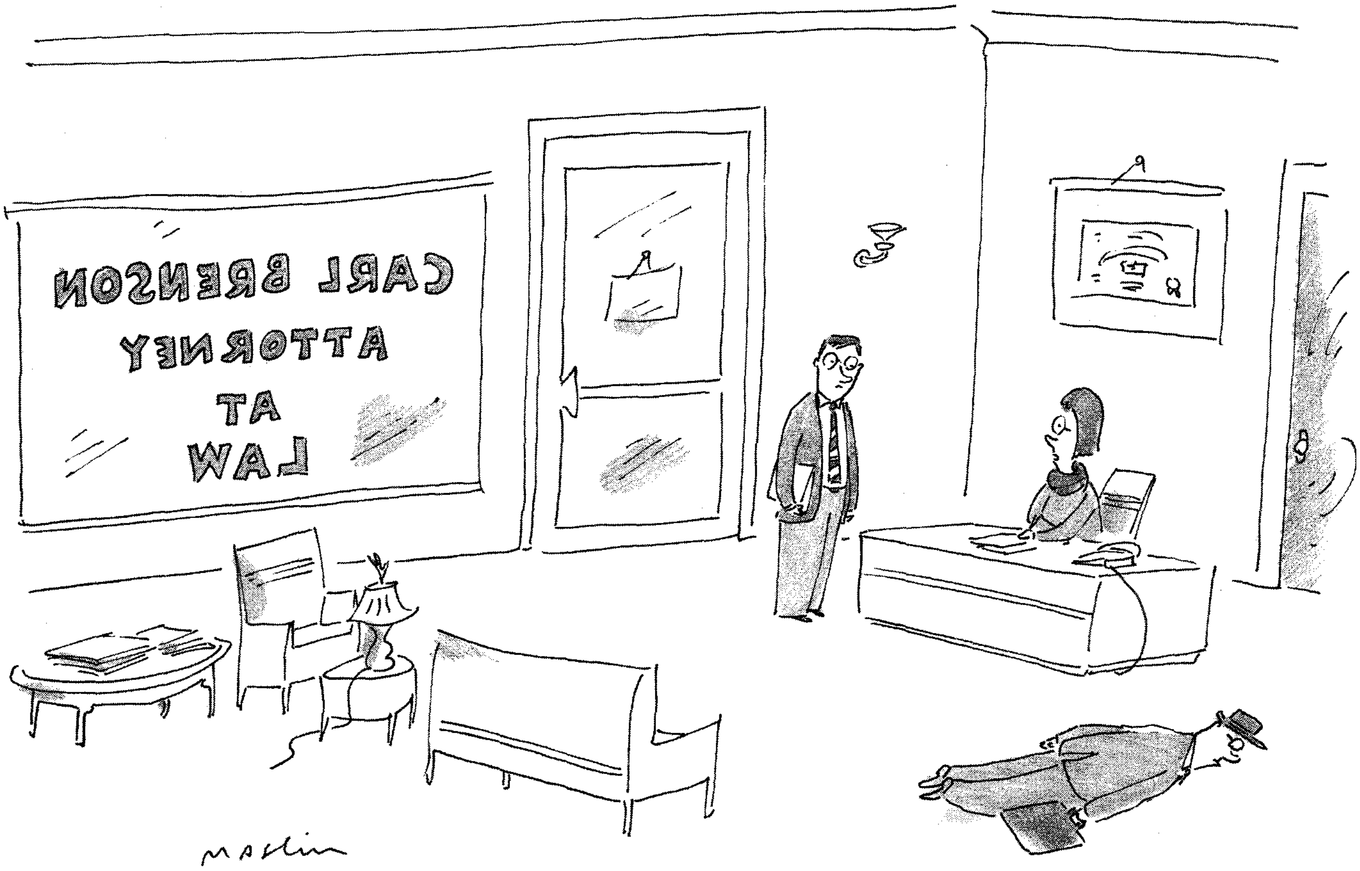
"Does this make me your bitch?"


Victoria Roberts

"It's sort of like a compass, see, except that wherever you are in the world it points toward Connecticut."



"When the Court questions a witness, the witness is not permitted to reply, 'Let's not go there.' "


CARL BRENSON
ATTORNEY
AT
LAW
Maslin

"Mr. Brenson shed his skin this morning. Is it possible for you to reschedule?"

PROFILE

WAS THIS MAN A GENIUS?

A year with Andy Kaufman, the consummate straight man.

BY JULIE HECHT

ONE night in 1975, I was tying up the garbage when my husband called me to come and see something he was watching on TV. "You have to see this!" he called. I couldn't believe there was anything on television that I had to see, but he sounded as if he had found something exciting and wonderful.

There was a tall, dark, and almost handsome man, dressed in a black turtleneck sweater, with a button-down shirt and a checked sports jacket over it. He was standing on a stage, with a small record-player next to him, and when he put the needle on, it played the Mighty Mouse theme song. The man appeared to have no idea what he was doing until the singing began. Then he knew just what he was doing, and suddenly he turned into a baritone star from a nineteen-fifties musical as he started to lip-synch the words. It wasn't funny the way other things are funny. It just made you laugh.

The mysterious man was Andy Kaufman, on "Saturday Night Live." During the next couple of years, I tried to watch the show whenever he was on as a guest. In 1978, I read that he would be performing in New York, at Town Hall. I got the idea that I would meet him, talk to him, and find out how he came to do what he was doing, and I would write about it.

At the end of a year of meeting with Andy—and hanging out and taping whatever happened—I went to my typewriter, and soon had a long manuscript, which was thought to be too strange to be published at the time. Most people didn't know who Andy was. He had made a special for a television network, but no network would show it. Then Andy was advised by his manager to take a part on the sitcom "Taxi" so that he could become well known. This worked, and the special was televised at last.

A cough that Andy had for a while turned out to be lung cancer, and he died in 1984. He was thirty-five years old.

Now a movie has been made about him, and I thought it would be a good idea to show how he talked about his own life.

NOT FUNNY

"I WANT the audience to have a wonderful happy feeling inside them and leave with big smiles on their faces," Andy said with a blank stare when I met him for the first time. When he saw reviews calling him a comedian, he looked unhappy. "I wouldn't mind being compared to Charlie Chaplin or W. C. Fields," he said sadly. "But I don't find most comedy funny."

"What's it for, some kinda movie magazine, or what?" Andy's manager, George Shapiro, had asked me over the phone from Beverly Hills. "Yeah, well, Andy doesn't like to do these things, and he's going to be very busy when he's in New York. But, listen, he's also going to perform at his high school, in Great Neck, and this is a great triumph for him because he was so shy in high school. You can go out there and talk to him after the concert."

Andy's mother was at home in Great Neck, and sounded surprised to hear that her son was a genius. She said that Andy's father was in the costume-jewelry business, and that she was a homemaker and mother. If Andy was from a regular family, the question of how he got to be the way he was seemed even more mysterious. I wanted to come right out and ask her, but it was too soon for that.

Andy himself, on the phone from Los Angeles, said he was rushing out to perform at the Comedy Store. Every few minutes, he'd say, "I'm late, I haven't meditated yet, I don't have time for this." When he called back after his performance, he had a list of questions: "How tall are you? When is your birthday? What color hair do you have? I just want to know whether I'd be interested in having a love affair with you. Wouldn't that be fun? You could get me to give away all my secrets and then you could use them in your story."

"Couldn't you tell the secrets any other way?"

"Yeah, probably, but with my pants up I'd give away less than with my pants down."

"Maybe this wasn't such a good idea," I said.

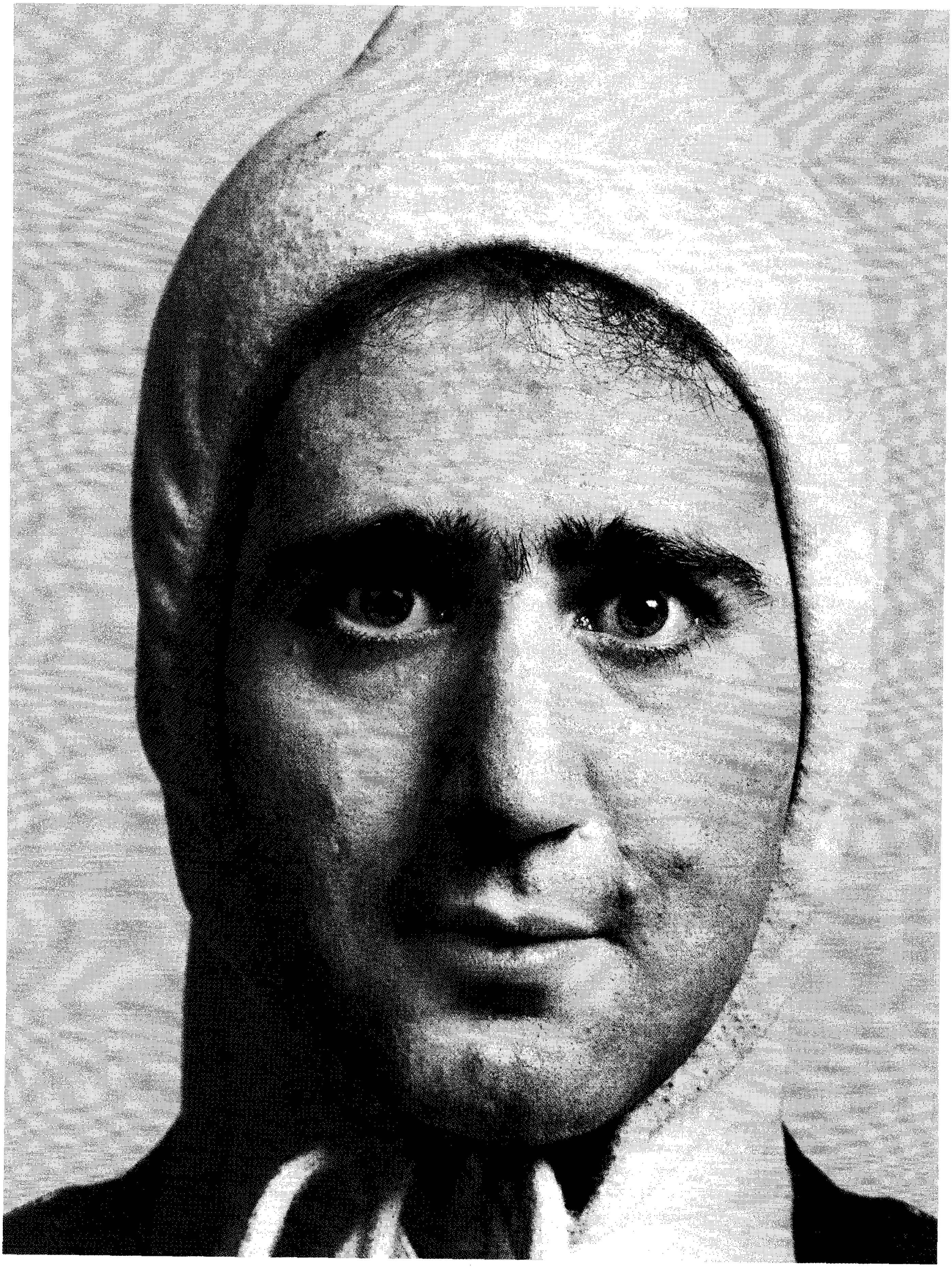
"I'm just kidding. But wouldn't it be great if you were my dream girl, a girl from my fantasies?"

GREAT NECK

WHEN the concert didn't begin on time the unruly mob of kids in the auditorium began screaming for Andy. Soon he danced onto the stage holding a microphone and singing "Oklahoma." He skipped around as he sang in an unprofessional voice. Then he began to speak with an unknown foreign accent. The foreign man started to tell some jokes in a meek and nervous way, and when the audience wouldn't laugh he began to laugh himself. Then the audience began to boo and the foreign man started to apologize and cry. When he recovered he said he'd like to do some impressions, but they were so bad they weren't impressions at all. Finally, he said he'd like to do Elvis Presley. He turned around and changed into a costume and then did an unbelievably perfect imitation. He even had Elvis Presley's voice. The audience of kids went crazy with happiness. Then Andy stepped forward and, in the foreign accent again, said, "Tenk you vedy much."

While I waited outside Andy's dressing room, his father came over and sat down. "Andy was the first in our neighborhood to entertain at children's birthday parties," he said. "Lily Tomlin heck-

ELIZABETH WOLYNSKI



Andy, in 1978: "How can you write this? You don't know anything about me. You don't know about the craziness, the insanity."

led him in Los Angeles, but then she apologized and explained that she thought he was a real artist."

A guy named Bob came along and said he was Andy's road manager. I believed him, because he had long blond hair and was wearing a cap with a visor. "The first time I saw Andy talk to Johnny Carson, I figured that he was from Brooklyn or Long Island and came from a regular family," I told Bob as I tried to explain my project.

"Oh, you thought that was the real Andy?" Bob said. "That's just a character he does—Andy Kaufman—nice, normal, sweet boy. That's not really Andy."

ANDY sat down at a desk in a classroom and drank from two large bottles of juice. Some students stood around and asked him questions like "Who are your influences?" He told them that his parents had taken him to a night club when he was a child and that he saw a singer there and he presumed the singer was Elvis Presley. Around that time, he began to imitate the singer. Years later, he realized that the singer was an imitator of Elvis Presley and that he had been imitating the imitator all along.

"How did you feel when you realized you were imitating the wrong person?" one of the students asked.

"Pretty bad. But nobody knew I was imitating the imitator. So it wasn't that bad."

When Bob came in, Andy said, "Where have you been? You're supposed to come and tell me our time is up. What kind of a road manager are you?" Andy promised the students one more question but stayed for another hour.

Bob followed Andy out of the room carrying four big suitcases.

"Take my juice, too," Andy said.

"How can I take the juice with all this?" Bob asked.

"You will take the juice. I need my juice."

"I can take the juice," I said.

"No, Bob must take the juice," Andy said in a zombie voice. "He must carry everything. Do not interfere. He will manage."

PARTY

"IF you made me late for my mother's party, I'll be really angry," Andy told Bob in the car. "It'll be all your fault, all the blame on you."

"Me? Why me?" Bob said.

"You were supposed to come for me! It was all arranged!"

"Come on! You mean you can't get away from high-school kids? What is it, the New York *Times*?"

"I ought to fire you on the spot!"

"This must be a joke," I said.

"You were there. You witnessed the whole thing," Andy said.

A crowd of mink coats was emerging from the house as we drove up. Some of the minks embraced and kissed Andy, and one said, "You were so funny, I died laughing."

"Why is everyone leaving already?" Andy asked his mother.

"Andy, darling, they've been waiting here for two hours," Mrs. Kaufman said. "Where were you?"

"Bob made me late," Andy said. "It's all his fault. See, Bob? You made me miss my mother's party. She baked cakes and everything. It was in my honor and I wasn't even there."

Once inside a spick-and-span split-level house, Bob and I were shown to a giant table filled with food—cakes, fruit, bread, cheese, and puddings. There were still a few guests milling around, and I noticed that Andy had a small tape recorder in his hand and pushed buttons on it as he ran from room to room.

"Why does he want to tape these people?" I asked Bob.

"He tapes all kinds of things. That's what he does."

"Andy, come eat," his mother called. "Bob, will you have some chicken soup? This has vegetables—carrots, celery, and onions. And I put in two chickens. Andy, are you having soup?"

"In my mother's house I eat whatever I'm served," he told me as he sat down at the table. While he waited for his dinner, he tucked a linen napkin into his shirt. Everything on his plate was white—creamed chicken, white rice, and a noodle pudding with sour cream. When he was finished eating, he got up and put some chocolate and coffee ice cream into a bowl and took it back to the table, where he sat down and began to stir. The stirring went on and on.

"Will Tony Clifton be at Town Hall?" Bob asked.

"I hope so. I hope we can get him," Andy said.

"Who is Tony Clifton?" I asked.

"Oh, he's this Las Vegas night-club singer, kind of a lowlife. But Andy gets Tony to open his act for him. I can't stand him myself. What do you think of him, Mrs. Kaufman?"

"Who? Tony Clifton?" she asked, from her place at the kitchen sink. "I don't like him."

"Hey, smooda," Andy said to Bob. "Did you meditate yet?"

"Why does he call you smooda?" I asked Bob.

"That's my name. Z-M-U-D-A."

"Do you expect me to believe that?" I said.

"What is this? I ought to be insulted. She thinks my name is a joke. Mrs. Kaufman, what's my last name?"

"Zmuda."

"You both got everyone to go along with it," I said.

"Are you cracking up already?" Bob said. "Usually it takes them a little longer."

HIGHWAY

I DIDN'T see how someone like Andy could drive on a highway. "Don't worry, I'll drive," Bob said. As soon as we were in the car, I noticed that Andy was the driver and he was on the wrong side of the road. Then he turned on the radio, took his hands off the wheel, and started to clap to the music.

"I don't think this is funny," I said.

"I keep telling you I'm not trying to be funny."

"He can't help himself," Bob said. "When he hears his music he has to do it."

"Let's turn off the radio then," I said.

"O.K., but I'll still hear it in my head," Andy said and continued singing and dancing as he swerved the car around on the icy roads.

"Oh God, wait'll he gets onto the highway!" Bob said. "Then he'll be speeding, too!"

"I know you two planned this and it just isn't funny. I'm going to get out if you don't stop."

"You can't get out," Andy said. "There's no place for you to go."

"You can be killed, too, you know. 'Unknown comedians,' the obituary will say."

"Comedians?" Bob said.

"I don't see anything wrong with the way I'm driving," Andy said.

"C'mon, Kawfman," Bob said. One of their fun things to do was to pronounce Andy's last name wrong. "Cut it out. Let me just drive back to the city."

"Absolutely not! I'm getting angry now."

"I'm getting out," I said.

"Look, I'll drive you to a diner I know.

You can call a cab from there. Then we can have some coffee while we're waiting."

"Have some *coffee*?"

"We're still friends, aren't we?" Andy said.

"I'll tell you when I see the diner."

"What about your story? What will you do?"

"I'll see you another time."

"There is no other time! This is it! I don't have any more time for you!"

"Then why did you screw it up like this?"

"*You* screwed it up! I was driving you all the way back to the city! We could have had fun! But you had to get afraid!"

"You're really crazy. We can't discuss this."

"Look, here we are. Didn't I say I'd take you to a nice diner?"

I was surprised to see that we were in front of a diner.

"Come on," Andy said. "I'll buy you some coffee or tea, or anything you want. Zmuda, you haven't meditated yet!"

"Hey, you're right. I know! I'll do it now, in the car, while you go in for coffee."

"Good idea," Andy said. "Let me talk to the cab company," he said as we walked to the diner. "If I tell them we're over the city line it will be cheaper."

Andy had a forlorn look as we stood at the phone making arrangements for the cab. His white skin, his long black eyelashes, and his turquoise-blue eyes gave him the look of an otherworldly creature.

DINER

"TWO large orange juices," Andy ordered. "Both for me. And the young lady will have tea."

"It's probably canned juice," I said.

"In California I make fresh juice in my own juicer," Andy said.

"Here comes Bob," I said.

"Sh-h-h. Don't say anything."

Bob ignored us and sat down at the counter. A big, white-haired man came over to him and said, "You're in my seat, bub."

"Who says!" Bob yelled.

"I says! That's my seat you're in!"

Bob and the man began to argue as other customers and diner employees looked on. All of a sudden, Bob started to cry. "So I accidentally took a guy's seat!" he said in between sobs. "How was I supposed to know?" The counterman and the other diner patrons came over and tried to comfort him. I was alarmed to hear Andy yell in a deep zombie voice, "Imagine that, a grown man crying! I'm disgusted."

"Who asked you?" called the white-haired customer, who was now standing over Bob in a sympathetic way. Andy looked ahead with a blank stare and said, even louder, "A grown man crying! I'm ashamed for the human race, I'm ashamed to be part of mankind!"

"You don't wanna be part of it, leave it!" yelled the customer.

"Could we get out of here?" I said.

"He thinks he's a big man just because he's got a girl with him," Bob sobbed as Andy and I got up to leave.

"Anyone's more of a man than a grown man who cries!" Andy said.

"Leave him alone already," called the customer.

Bob got up and on his way to the door he said, "Oh, I forgot my check."

"It's O.K. Forget it," said the counterman. Bob went out and did a wild dance to the parking lot. "Just 'cause he's got a girl with him!" he yelled. "I'd like to see him without a girl. Then we'd see. How big a man will he be then?"

Andy and I walked to the car while the restaurant people watched through the door. When we were out of view, Bob got into the car with us, and he and Andy began congratulating each other.

"I bet you planned the whole thing," I said.

"How could we plan it? You saw the guy tell me I was in his seat," Bob said.

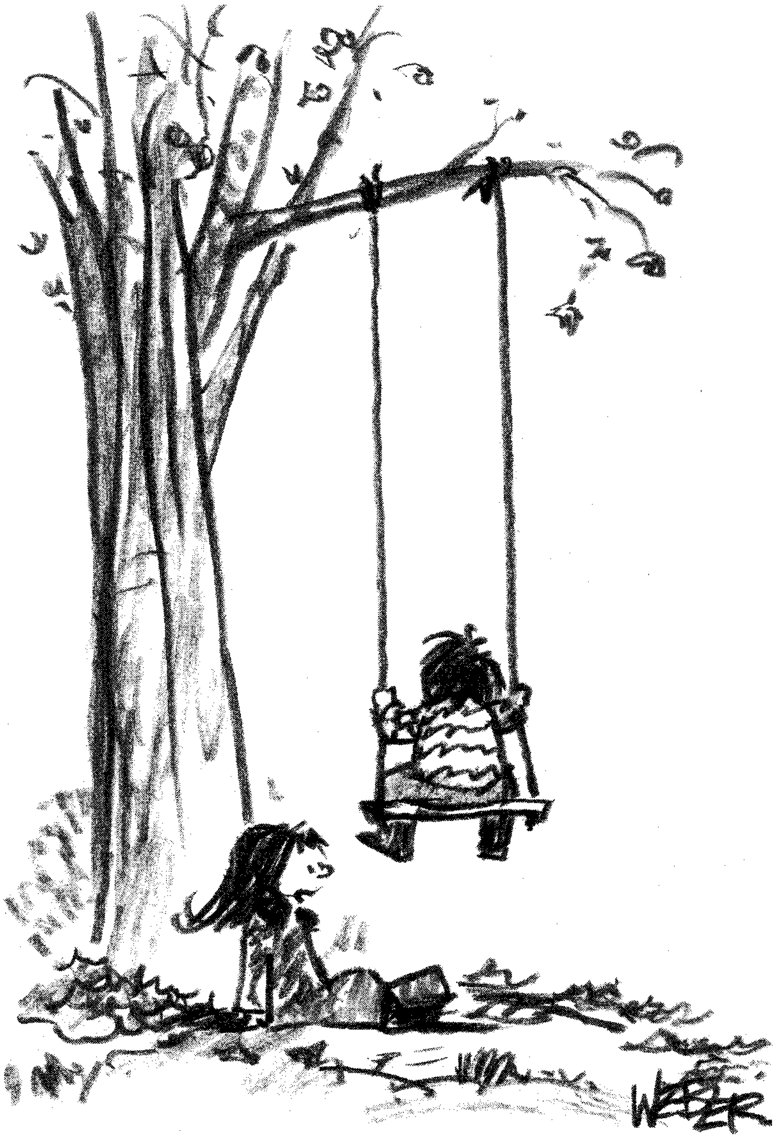
"You probably took his seat on purpose. You must have a plot for every occasion."

"Come on, it was brilliant improvisation!" Andy said.

"What if the man had had a heart attack?" I said.

"Those are the risks you take," Bob explained.

"Don't you think it's cruel to manipu-



"When I grow up, I want to be rediscovered."

late innocent bystanders that way?” I said.

“What’s cruel? You didn’t like that?” Andy asked.

“I’d like it in a play or a movie.”

“If you don’t like that,” Andy said, “I don’t know what to tell you. Because doing that is my most favorite hobby in the world.”

CABDRIVER

THE cabdriver was wearing an unrealistic black wig and he said his name was Anthony Imbecilli. He was obviously part of the act.

“We could have had a really good time,” Andy told me as we said goodbye. “Going in and out of different restaurants all night on the way to the city. It was your opportunity to be with me.”

“We just wasted about five hours,” I said.

“I know, and it’s all your fault,” Andy said.

“Would you two stop bickering?” Bob said. “You just met and you’re always arguing.”

“It’s all her fault,” Andy said. Then he gave me a hug and a kiss goodbye. “We’re still friends, aren’t we?” he said.

“I love you, but you’re really insane,” I said.

“Let’s go,” Bob said, rolling his eyes. “Kawfman, go back to Great Neck and get some sleep.”

When we were safely in the cab, Bob said, “He taped you saying you loved him. He’ll get you to bring your husband to meet him at Town Hall and he’ll play the tape onstage. He’ll splice it out of context. He’s a maniac. I was trying to warn you, but now it’s too late. He has everything on tape.”

“What for?”

“To torture people. He has a sadistic streak. He can’t have a real girlfriend, because he’ll tape the most intimate moments and play it at a party. No girl will have anything to do with him. You’ll see. Wait till your husband hears those ‘I love you’ tapes and the sounds of the hugs and the kisses.”

“He loves Andy, too. He’ll know what it was.”

“Can you count on that? He better be a pretty understanding guy.”

TOWN HALL

ANDY danced onto the stage as he sang “Oklahoma.” I asked him why he chose his last song—“In this friendly, friendly world with each day so full of joy, why should any heart be lonely?” “It’s an old Fabian hit,” he explained.

After the show, I asked Mrs. Kaufman if she’d have some time to talk about Andy. “Of course,” she said. “We’ll meet for lunch.”

“Oh, good, because I don’t know whether he’ll talk to me again. He says I missed my chance because I didn’t like the way he was driving us back to New York last week.”

Mrs. Kaufman stared at me and smiled. I wanted to describe the incident without seeming to say anything bad about her son. It wasn’t possible. “Don’t you realize that with Andy it has to be fun?” she said. “He won’t do it if it’s not *fun*.”

HOTEL ROOM

ANDY and I had made a plan to meet for dinner a few days later. By the time he answered the phone, it was 11 P.M. “When I get involved watching television, I can’t turn it off,” he explained. “Then I had to meditate. You come up here, because I can be finishing some things while you’re on your way.”

“But aren’t we going downtown?” I said. “That’s where they’ll be open late.”

“I want to go to a real restaurant. Will they be real restaurants?”

“What do you mean, ‘real’?”

“You know, the kind of place with real waiters. Waiters with foreign accents, waiters who carry a napkin over their arms. I want to go to the kind of place my parents would take me to.”

“There are real restaurants downtown.”

“Do they have lobster tails?”

“They have lobster.”

“But do they have lobster tails?”

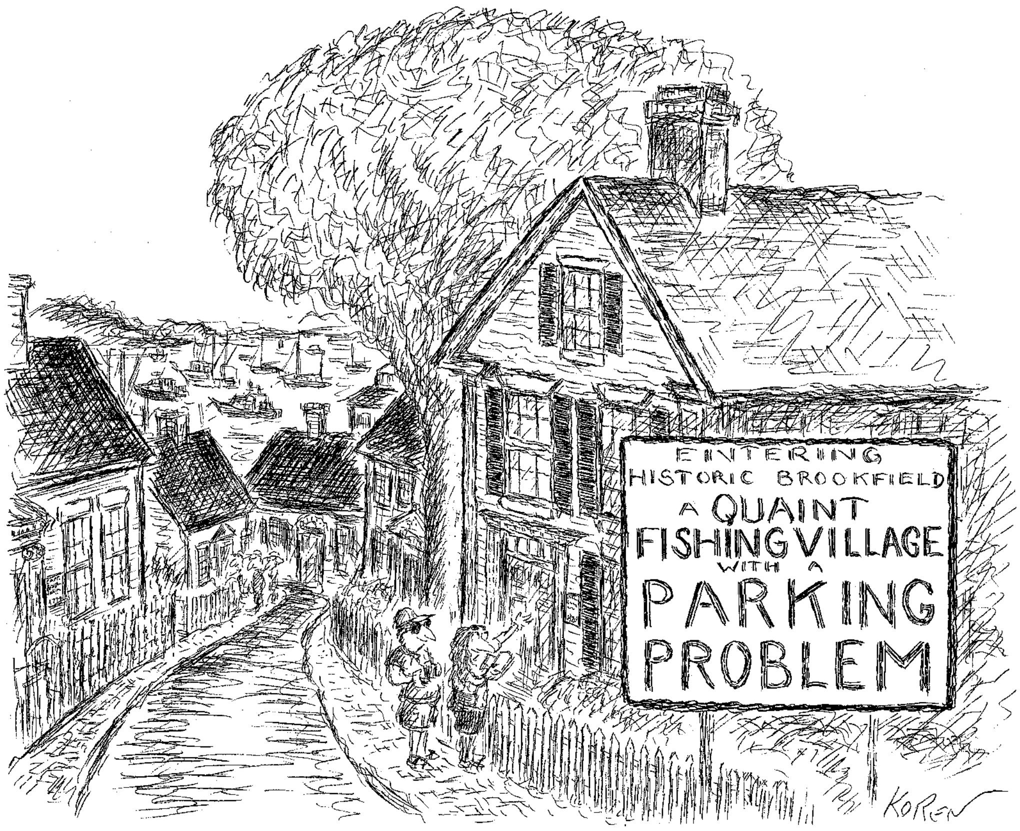
“They’re all going to be closed if we keep talking about it.”

“I know a place that’s open late! My parents took me there. Joe’s Pier 52. They have lobster tails and everything.”

When I called Andy from the lobby of the Essex House, he answered in an English accent and said he wasn’t there. When I called back a few minutes later, he said, “Come up and wait for me while I finish my application to a meditation retreat. You can watch television.”

“You know I hate television,” I said.

“Hurry up, come in,” he



said at the door. "I'm watching 'The Twilight Zone.' Look, this woman is really hundreds of years old. It's the same actress, see, none of her family knows how old she is."

"Don't you think you should try to get ready? It's almost midnight."

"The restaurant stays open till one, I found out. O.K., I'll do this thing while I listen to the show."

He sat down at a table covered with papers and twenty or thirty bottles of vitamin pills.

"By the way, why do you meditate?" I asked.

"It keeps me calm," he said while tapping his foot up and down and rapping his fingers on the table.

"I can't believe you really like 'The Twilight Zone,'" I said.

"Of course I do! I suppose you're one of those people who think 'Mary Tyler Moore' is the greatest show on TV. O.K. now, just shut up while I do this. You know, you should be very flattered, I treat you like a member of my family, like a wife or mother or sister. I can yell at you and do whatever I want."

"It doesn't feel flattering."

"That's because you don't appreciate it. Mostly with people I'm shy and quiet. Now, let me tell you how much I love 'The Twilight Zone.'"

"You already told me."

"O.K., and what's my favorite movie?"

"'American Graffiti.'"

"Right! And what are my favorite other movies that are foreign movies?"

"'8½' and 'Phantom of Liberty.'"

"And in what movie do I identify myself with the hero?"

"'The Graduate.'"

"Wasn't it just like 'The Graduate' the other night at my parents' house?"

"No."

"Why? How could you say no?"

"Because you're not a graduate with a promising future."

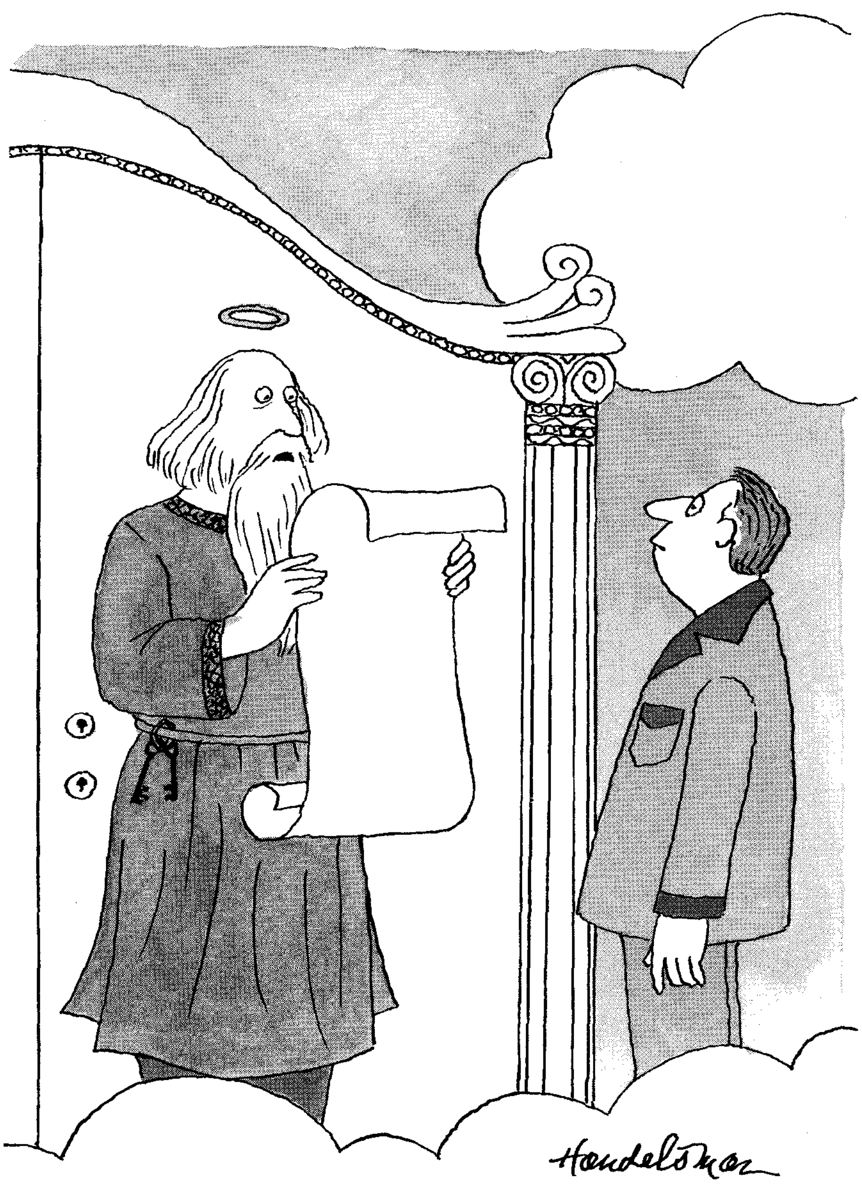
"But they think I might be a Hollywood star."

"Yes, but I saw no resemblance between you and the graduate."

"You're too literal-minded. O.K., come here. I want to show you something. Come through here into the bedroom to the bathroom. Just trust me. It'll be worth it."

"I would never trust you."

"Come on, into the bathroom. I'm going to turn out the light for a second and close the door."



"It says here that you gave a lot of money to both parties and neither expected nor received anything in return. Very nice, but we'll have to put you in the crazy section."

• •

"I'm not going in there with the light out and the door closed. You'll probably lock the door and check out of the hotel."

"Why are you so suspicious of me? Come on! Your last chance! Get in there or you'll be sorry."

"Absolutely not," I said.

"O.K.! You won't go into the bathroom. Then you can leave! No bathroom, no trusting me to show you something worthwhile, then no hour alone with me! No dinner tonight. No story for you. Come on. Out! Get out! I mean it!"

"O.K., let me get my things."

"No, *no* things, out without things!"

"I'm not leaving without my coat."

"Coat! Come on! Out, out, out, before I get angry!"

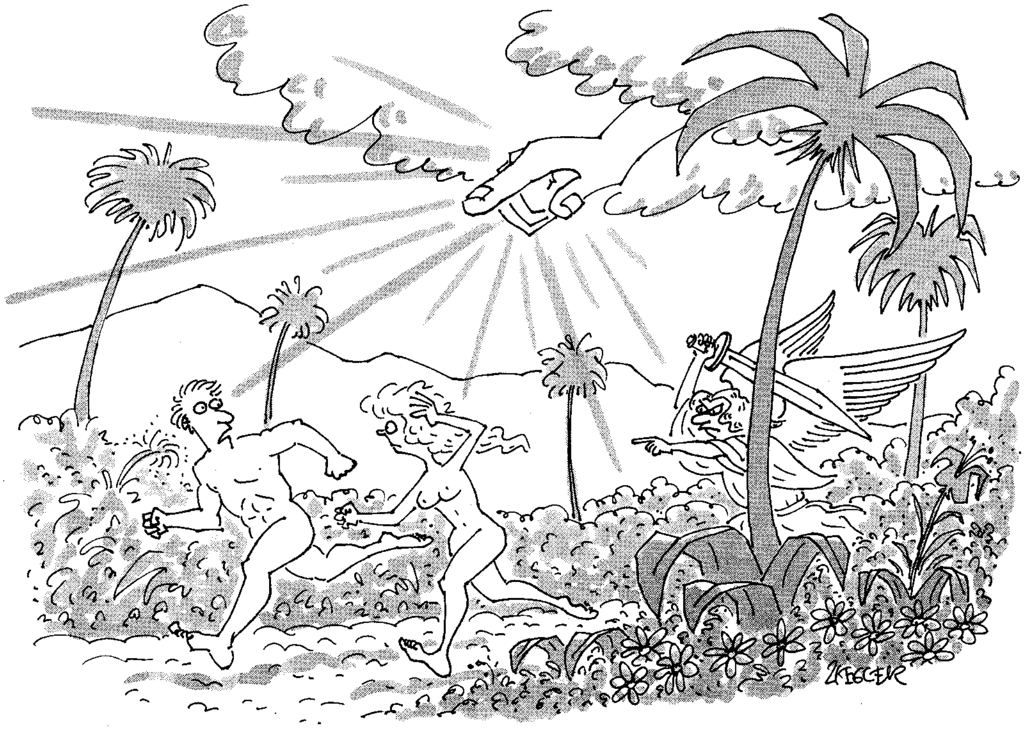
I gathered up my coat and notebook and tape recorder. "Goodbye," I said.

"Good riddance!" he yelled and slammed the door behind me.

As I waited for the elevator and wondered how I might explain this episode to anyone, Andy's door opened. He was smiling. "You believed that?" he asked. "Come on, come back in. Are you crying? Come here, let me comfort you."

"I'm certainly not crying. I'm tired. I don't usually stay up all night."

"O.K., I'm not really mad at you. But



“At least, we don’t have to sit through some big, prolonged trial.”

the truth is you missed out on something great.”

“What was it?”

“You should have come if you wanted to see. But you didn’t trust me, so you missed it. Now you’ll never know.”

REAL RESTAURANT

“THE kitchen just closed,” the maître d’ said when we arrived at five minutes to one.

“I’m very sorry, but I just phoned and was told I would be served if I arrived before one,” Andy said in his English accent.

“It is almost one now,” said the maître d’.

“Almost, but not yet one, and I require that you serve us.”

Finally, the man agreed and took us to a table.

“Aren’t you going too far?” I said to Andy.

“What do you mean? You don’t believe I’m really angry?”

“If you’re angry, why are you talking in an English accent?”

“I can be angry in any accent. I have to stay in character,” Andy said. “Have whatever you like. I want to pay for dinner.”

“I’m paying for the dinner,” I said. “It’s part of the job.”

“I want to do something nice for you.”

“You are—the interview.”

“Wouldn’t it be funny if we fell in love?”

“Very funny.”

“You know why, because, little by little, I’m falling in love with you.”

“Not that funny.”

“O.K., I’m not really falling in love with you, but wouldn’t it be fun? What would we do? Would we go to the top of the Empire State Building and ride the Staten Island Ferry and walk in the streets eating ice cream, like couples in love are supposed to do?”

“Is that what people do?”

“Wouldn’t it be fun to do those things as a couple in love?”

“No.”

“Why, have you done them already?”

“I’ve never done any of them and I don’t want to.”

“Why not? I do. I want to do everything I missed when I was too shy.” Then he closed his eyes and said grace, or pretended to—I couldn’t be sure.

DRESSING ROOM

ANDY’S plan for “Saturday Night Live” that March was to read from “The Great Gatsby.” He showed his costume to Bob and me. It was a black tuxedo and a dark-yellow polyester shirt with ruffles down the front. “This is my father’s shirt,” he explained. “I chose it because it’s the kind of shirt I think Gatsby would wear.”

“Maybe you should read over the description of his shirts,” I said.

“Why, what’s wrong with this shirt?”

For the dress rehearsal, Andy came out onto the stage and addressed the audience in the English accent. He said he had decided to come out as his real self and read from “The Great Gatsby.”

After a couple of minutes of the reading, the crew and the audience began to boo. Andy asked whether they’d like to hear him read more or play some music on a record-player he had next to him. All chose the music, and he put the record on. It was Andy’s voice reading what he’d just read.

“Am I blowing my whole career on this?” he asked Bob after the rehearsal. “Should I just go out there and play my drums?”

John Belushi came by and complimented Andy on the reading. Then he said, “I saw Tony Clifton. That was really great.”

“Oh, I don’t do Tony Clifton anymore,” Andy said. “Where’d you see him?”

“I just saw you do him recently.”

“That was really him. I used to do Tony Clifton, but now I get the real Tony Clifton to come and be himself.”

“What? You mean for religious reasons or something?”

“No, he got mad, he didn’t like me doing him, so I had to stop, and now I get him to appear at my shows whenever he can.”

“Oh,” John said. Then he gave Andy the look Humphrey Bogart had when he was told that the casino was being closed because gambling wasn’t allowed.

SITCOM

IN June, Andy was away at his meditation retreat. When he got out he said he couldn’t come to New York, because of some great news. “I have a part in a new series done by the people who did ‘Mary Tyler Moore’ and all those shows. It's going to be a big hit! I'm a mechanic who can't speak any English."

"I thought you hated those shows," I said.

"But my manager says it'll be good for my career. I'll get well known and my special can get aired. I have to do it."

ALBANY

In October, for some reason, Andy was performing at the state college in Albany. At noon, Bob and I met him in his room at the Thruway House motel. "How do I look?" he asked. "I know I'm sick, I have a cold or something, and I'm so tired. I need sleep."

"You need some fresh air and exercise," I said.

"He's in good condition," Bob said. "Look at his build."

Andy pulled up his T-shirt and showed us a soft white area.

"And the guy's got a tan now," Bob said.

"I know I'm pale and sickly!" Andy said. "This business is *killing* me!"

At the motel restaurant, people were finishing lunch when we arrived for breakfast. "What can we get them to give us at three o'clock in the afternoon?" Bob asked.

"You know what?" Andy said. "I'm gonna ask them if they'll make some eggs. I'll pay them to clean the griddle if they say they've cleaned it for the day. I'll pay them ten dollars extra to get eggs. I'd give them a hundred. But I've done this before and they never say O.K. to making eggs."

Andy went to negotiate and the cook consented.

"Do you have any grapefruit?" I asked the waitress.

"No, grapefruit juice."

"Frozen?"

"It's concentrate, freshly made. It's not Tang."

"What did she mean, ‘concentrated’?" Andy asked when she'd gone.

"They take out the water and freeze the orange part," I said.

"Like somebody grabbing you and taking all the blood out of you and freezing you for the future," Bob said.

"It really screws things up if you get frozen and returned to life, because what happened to your soul? It doesn't work out," Andy said.

"Maybe the soul freezes, too," I said.

"Do you notice anything about these eggs?" Bob asked.

"They're awful," Andy said, laughing.

"‘They want eggs, we'll give them *eggs*, all right!’ the cook must have said, right, Andy?" Bob said.

"Let's not eat them," Andy said.

We had one minute to make a fifteen-mile drive to the airport the day after Andy's show. "I didn't meditate and I didn't have breakfast," Andy said in the van. "Where are my chocolate-chip cookies?"

"Here," Bob said. "Will you look at him?"

Andy had the box of cookies in his lap and was putting them into his face, one after another.

The plane was an hour late. "Good," Andy said. "We can have some breakfast."

"There's only an omelette on the lunch menu," the waitress said, when Andy asked about eggs.

"Is there any fresh orange juice?" I asked her.

"No, concentrate."

"Wherever we go she has to ask about the juice," Andy said.

"She's like you," said Bob.

"But I keep it under control," I said.

"If you didn't, it could be a career, like with Andy," Bob said.

"Why don't you copy my act?" Andy asked me.

"We have a one-fifty plane," Bob reminded the waitress.

"But it's one-forty-seven now," she said.

"Bob, this is your fault!" Andy yelled.

We ran down the stairs and through a long corridor.

"That's our plane," Andy told an airline employee, who had to signal the pilot out on the runway. He looked at Andy and Bob in disbelief. Bob was running to the plane and Andy was clutching a bag of laundry and his box of cookies. His loden coat was flapping in the wind.

"Come on, Kawfman, you jerk!" Bob yelled from the plane.

Andy hugged me goodbye with his laundry and cookies between us. "Keep in touch!" he called as he ran up the steps.

CONTRACT

When I didn't hear from Andy by Christmas, I called his mother to ask where he was. She said he was in the hospital with hepatitis. "It's the type you get from eating shellfish, the doctor says," Mrs. Kaufman explained.

In January, Andy called me and said, "All I did in the hospital was watch television. I realize that there's a whole other world out there of television even worse than ‘Taxi.’"

"How can that be?" I said.

"Did you see the one about the fat girl? It was touching. It was heartrending. I cried when I saw that."

"If you cried it's because you're on the show."

"Come on! It was touching and heartbreaking. Why didn't you like it? O.K., O.K. Sometimes I just feel sick when I see the show. What am I going to do? I have a contract to be in it."

I was waiting at the NBC reception desk for Andy when I saw him walking down the hall with a strange man in a polyester suit. They went into the dressing room. "So you want to just interview me while I get ready?" Andy said to the man.

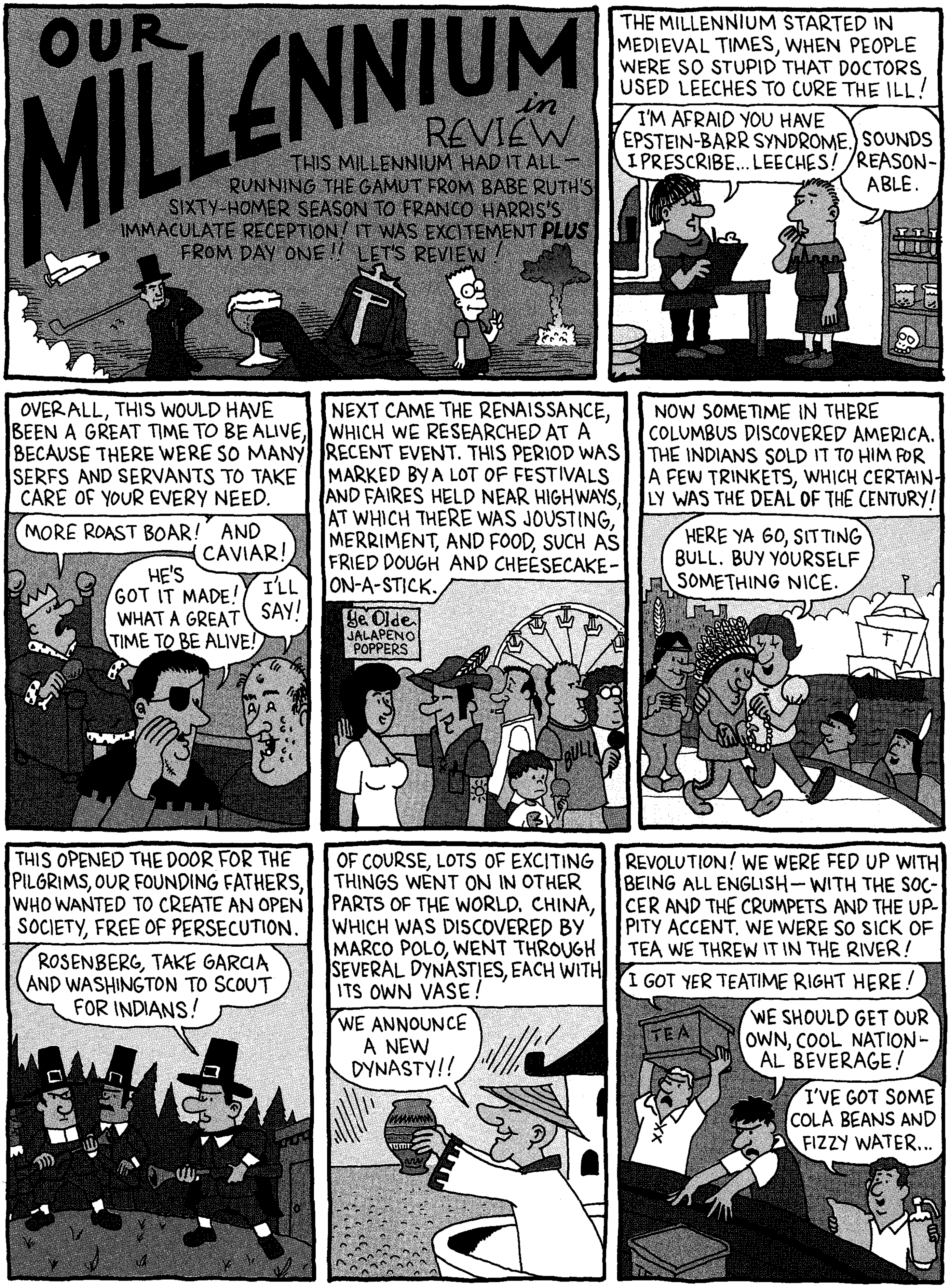
"Here's your birthday present," I said and handed Andy the most recent book by Hubert Selby, Jr.

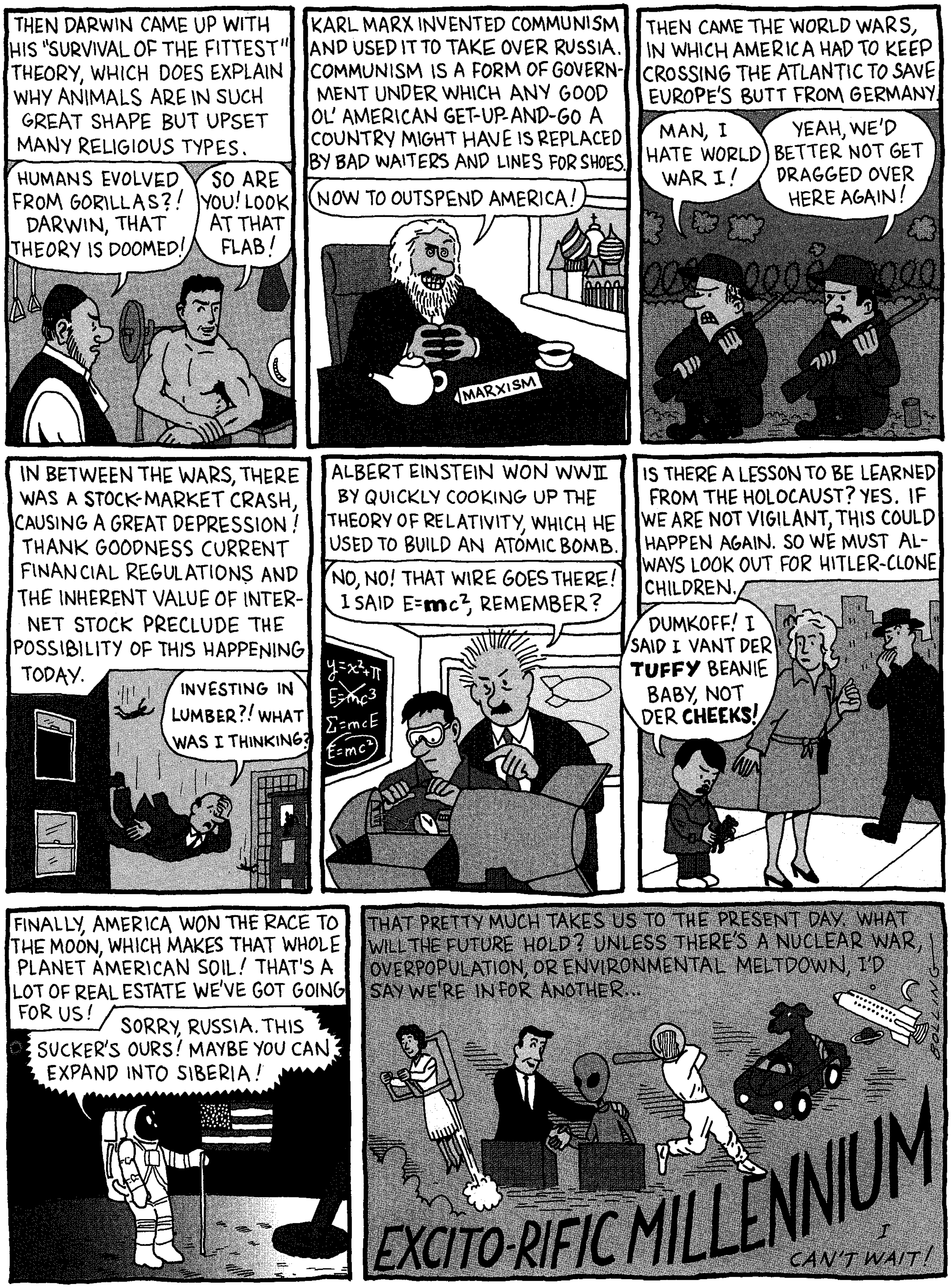
"Oh, I bet I know what this is," he said. "Is it by my most favorite author? He's a great writer! He's in the same category along with Shakespeare and James Joyce."

"Well, Andy, I read a slightly flattering profile of you in, what was it, *New West*," the reporter said. "It was kinda ‘We don't know if he has real talent.’ I say to myself, ‘Here's Andy Kaufman doing small clubs and "Saturday Night Live" and he finally saw the light . . .’"

"No, I took ‘Taxi’ for a lot of reasons. There's not much else I can do with Foreign Man. At first, people would get scared and embarrassed. Then when they saw it was just an act it wasn't brave anymore, and I always want to be new and brave. But people loved the character, so I decided to do it once a week."

"But, I mean, beyond that, *Is your star rising, Andy*? I don't want to compare you to Steve Martin, but, I mean,


OUR MILLENNIUM in REVIEW
THIS MILLENNIUM HAD IT ALL — RUNNING THE GAMUT FROM BABE RUTH'S SIXTY-HOMER SEASON TO FRANCO HARRIS'S IMMACULATE RECEPTION! IT WAS EXCITEMENT PLUS FROM DAY ONE!! LET'S REVIEW!
THE MILLENNIUM STARTED IN MEDIEVAL TIMES, WHEN PEOPLE WERE SO STUPID THAT DOCTORS USED LEECHES TO CURE THE ILL!
I'M AFRAID YOU HAVE EPSTEIN-BARR SYNDROME. I PRESCRIBE... LEECHES!
SOUNDS REASONABLE.
OVERALL, THIS WOULD HAVE BEEN A GREAT TIME TO BE ALIVE, BECAUSE THERE WERE SO MANY SERFS AND SERVANTS TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR EVERY NEED.
MORE ROAST BOAR!
AND CAVIAR!
HE'S GOT IT MADE! WHAT A GREAT TIME TO BE ALIVE!
I'LL SAY!
NEXT CAME THE RENAISSANCE, WHICH WE RESEARCHED AT A RECENT EVENT. THIS PERIOD WAS MARKED BY A LOT OF FESTIVALS AND FAIRES HELD NEAR HIGHWAYS, AT WHICH THERE WAS JOUSTING, MERRIMENT, AND FOOD, SUCH AS FRIED DOUGH AND CHEESECAKE-ON-A-STICK.
Ye Olde JALAPENO POPPERS
BULL
NOW SOMETIME IN THERE COLUMBUS DISCOVERED AMERICA. THE INDIANS SOLD IT TO HIM FOR A FEW TRINKETS, WHICH CERTAINLY WAS THE DEAL OF THE CENTURY!
HERE YA GO, SITTING BULL. BUY YOURSELF SOMETHING NICE.
THIS OPENED THE DOOR FOR THE PILGRIMS, OUR FOUNDING FATHERS, WHO WANTED TO CREATE AN OPEN SOCIETY, FREE OF PERSECUTION.
ROSENBERG, TAKE GARCIA AND WASHINGTON TO SCOUT FOR INDIANS!
OF COURSE, LOTS OF EXCITING THINGS WENT ON IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD. CHINA, WHICH WAS DISCOVERED BY MARCO POLO, WENT THROUGH SEVERAL DYNASTIES, EACH WITH ITS OWN VASE!
WE ANNOUNCE A NEW DYNASTY!!
REVOLUTION! WE WERE FED UP WITH BEING ALL ENGLISH — WITH THE SOCCER AND THE CRUMPETS AND THE UPPITY ACCENT. WE WERE SO SICK OF TEA WE THREW IT IN THE RIVER!
I GOT YER TEATIME RIGHT HERE!
TEA
WE SHOULD GET OUR OWN, COOL NATIONAL BEVERAGE!
I'VE GOT SOME COLA BEANS AND FIZZY WATER...


THEN DARWIN CAME UP WITH HIS "SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST" THEORY, WHICH DOES EXPLAIN WHY ANIMALS ARE IN SUCH GREAT SHAPE BUT UPSET MANY RELIGIOUS TYPES.
HUMANS EVOLVED FROM GORILLAS?! DARWIN, THAT THEORY IS DOOMED!
SO ARE YOU! LOOK AT THAT FLAB!
KARL MARX INVENTED COMMUNISM AND USED IT TO TAKE OVER RUSSIA. COMMUNISM IS A FORM OF GOVERNMENT UNDER WHICH ANY GOOD OL' AMERICAN GET-UP-AND-GO A COUNTRY MIGHT HAVE IS REPLACED BY BAD WAITERS AND LINES FOR SHOES.
NOW TO OUTSPEND AMERICA!
MARXISM
THEN CAME THE WORLD WARS, IN WHICH AMERICA HAD TO KEEP CROSSING THE ATLANTIC TO SAVE EUROPE'S BUTT FROM GERMANY.
MAN, I HATE WORLD WAR I!
YEAH, WE'D BETTER NOT GET DRAGGED OVER HERE AGAIN!
IN BETWEEN THE WARS, THERE WAS A STOCK-MARKET CRASH, CAUSING A GREAT DEPRESSION! THANK GOODNESS CURRENT FINANCIAL REGULATIONS AND THE INHERENT VALUE OF INTERNET STOCK PRECLUDE THE POSSIBILITY OF THIS HAPPENING TODAY.
INVESTING IN LUMBER?! WHAT WAS I THINKING?
ALBERT EINSTEIN WON WWII BY QUICKLY COOKING UP THE THEORY OF RELATIVITY, WHICH HE USED TO BUILD AN ATOMIC BOMB.
NO, NO! THAT WIRE GOES THERE! I SAID E=mc², REMEMBER?
y=x²+π
~~E=mc³~~
Σ=mcE
E=mc²
IS THERE A LESSON TO BE LEARNED FROM THE HOLOCAUST? YES. IF WE ARE NOT VIGILANT, THIS COULD HAPPEN AGAIN. SO WE MUST ALWAYS LOOK OUT FOR HITLER-CLONE CHILDREN.
DUMKOFF! I SAID I VANT DER **TUFFY** BEANIE BABY, NOT DER **CHEEKS**!
FINALLY, AMERICA WON THE RACE TO THE MOON, WHICH MAKES THAT WHOLE PLANET AMERICAN SOIL! THAT'S A LOT OF REAL ESTATE WE'VE GOT GOING FOR US!
SORRY, RUSSIA. THIS SUCKER'S OURS! MAYBE YOU CAN EXPAND INTO SIBERIA!
THAT PRETTY MUCH TAKES US TO THE PRESENT DAY. WHAT WILL THE FUTURE HOLD? UNLESS THERE'S A NUCLEAR WAR, OVERPOPULATION, OR ENVIRONMENTAL MELTDOWN, I'D SAY WE'RE IN FOR ANOTHER...
EXCITO-RIFIC MILLENNIUM
I CAN'T WAIT!
BOLLING

Are you a hot property in show business?"

"Let me explain. I'm not concerned about being a star. I've made a special for ABC which most people think is the most innovative special ever made—they compare it to Ernie Kovacs, who I've never seen—but all the networks are against letting it be shown. It's a wonderful thing and I love it very much—that's why I'm doing 'Taxi,' so I can do more of my own shows."

"Last time on 'Saturday Night Live' what was it you read, 'War and Peace'?" the reporter asked with a smile.

"Yes, 'The Great Gatsby.' "

"I wonder if you'll stay as nice as you are."

"Who knows, maybe in ten years I'll be a bitter man," Andy said sincerely.

As soon as the reporter was gone, Andy began muttering interview questions to himself.

"How about those 'are you hot' questions?" I asked.

"And how was my answer?"

"I think the more you say you don't care about being a star the more he thinks you do."

"Why does he ask me if no matter what I say he's going to think something else?"

"They never can believe anyone wouldn't want to be a star."

"So what will he print? I should have said 'off the record.' Oh, I should have said, 'Yes I'd love to be a star, but off the record I don't care.' I need a publicist to tell people what I do. Like in California, we did fantastic things and the public never knew. One thing I did for my finale was a duet with Tony Clifton."

"How did you do that?" I asked, because I was under the impression that Andy did Tony Clifton.

"*Because, as I told you*," Andy said, "*Tony Clifton is a real person*. We rehearsed it together. 'Nothing could be finer than to be in Carolina in the morning.' Then I brought out the Rockettes and had them dance. Then I took the whole audience out to a restaurant, where we had milk and cookies, like I'm going to do at Carnegie Hall. Now, should I put gook on my hair or leave it? Oh—I forgot to tell him I'm a busboy at the Posh Bagel."

BOB was standing out in the hall. "Where's Andy?" he said frantically. "I gotta talk to him! He's gonna ruin the whole spot tonight! He's gonna pull out a gun and shoot himself!"

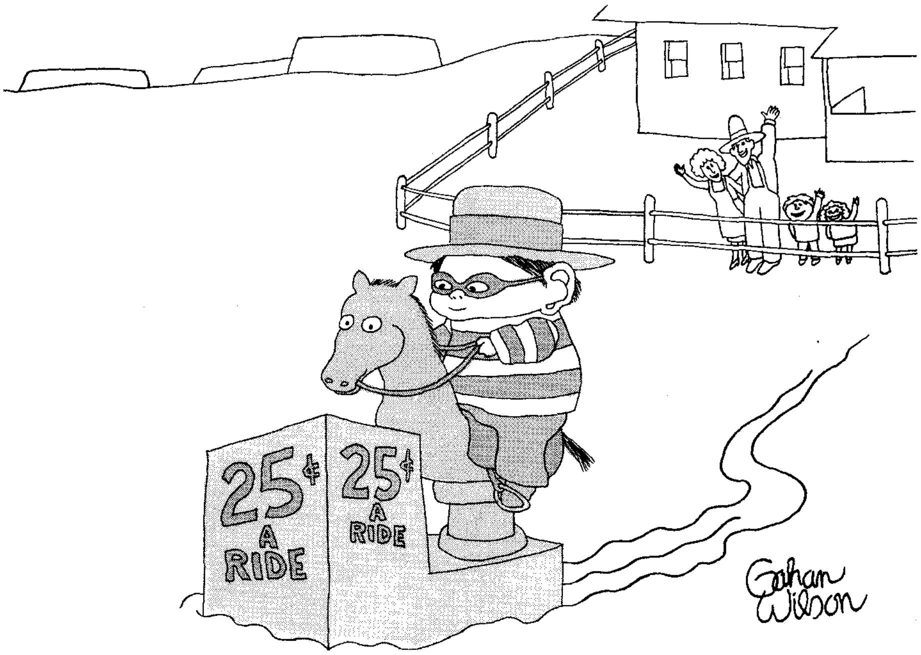
Away from everyone he'd hoped would hear, Bob said, "Did that sound convincing?"

When we got to the dressing room, Bob told Andy, "I was starting rumors in the hall. I said, 'He's lost his mind. He's gonna blow his brains out on TV.' "

"I'd love to do something like that," Andy said wistfully.

"You could say, 'I don't know how this got started. Zmuda's out of his mind.' Then I could say, 'Andy meditated for six months and he's going to do it on TV.' "

Andy loved the idea. "You think Lorne would want me to go on to see whether I'm going to do it?" he said.



"Goodbye, Masked Kid, and thanks for all the help!"

"I think he would, even at the cost of blowing your head off onstage," Bob said.

"Sure, everybody'd watch the show!" Andy said.

"Does he think that way?" I asked.

"He's a *producer*, isn't he?" said Bob.

"Most producers would say no," Andy said.

"Baaah! They got no sense of humor," Bob said.

"That's why they're producers," Andy said.

"Now, after Carnegie Hall," Bob said, "you take the three thousand people, but maybe you could break them up into smaller groups. You say, 'Now, folks, we're gonna go down to Seventh Avenue and everybody start screaming "Godzilla! Godzilla!" ' "

"Ohhhh yes!" Andy said. "But couldn't I get arrested for inciting a riot? I know if you yell 'Fire' . . . but I don't know if you yell 'Godzilla.' " He opened up his suitcase and started unpacking his costume.

"What would you do if Lorne comes up to you now and says, 'You're out of the show'?" Bob asked.

"What would I do? Why, what would you do? What should I do? I'm getting paid. A free trip to New York. Plane fare. Hotel. Why should they do something like that?"

"It could happen."

"How?"

"It could never happen. But what would you do?"

"What would I do? I'd be a little sad. I'd feel a little rejected. A little sad. . . . What's so funny about that? Why are you both laughing?"

THE TWO HOURS

THE moment has arrived for the two hours Andy has promised all year. "I can meet you for dinner, make a train back to Great Neck, and in between I have to meditate," Andy said.

"Do you want to do it downtown at our house?" I asked.

"If you wouldn't mind."

Andy arrived after ten o'clock. I tried to get him to start meditating immediately so we wouldn't be too late for any restaurant. I left him in the living room. When his hour was up, I noticed that my husband was watching "The Twilight Zone."

When Andy came in they both watched it together, discussing plots from various episodes they had seen.

Once outside on the street, in Greenwich Village, Andy looked around and said, “I used to be romantically in love with this place. I wanted to be a beatnik from the time I was in fifth grade. I wanted to be Maynard G. Krebs on ‘Dobie Gillis.’ It was the greatest show! It was a satire of a beatnik.”

“Here we are—Spring Street Natural,” I said.

“Oh, *Natural!*”

The hostess let us in and we sat down. “Anyhow, my parents took me to Greenwich Village when I was in fifth grade. They took me to Café Bizarre. I saw the advertisement—it said, ‘Off Beat Place for Beatniks.’ I thought, This must be where Maynard G. Krebs goes, even if he *is* a fictional character. Then four years later I went with my grandmother back there. When I first went, there were poetry readings and folk music, and, later, with my grandmother—no more of that. But when I thought about it I liked it even more. Gospel, calypso, African steel-drum bands—it was wonderful! That’s when I started to get into conga drumming. You see, something within me woke up. Anyway, I always wanted to be a beatnik. That was in ’64.”

“Wasn’t beatnik passé by then?”

“Yeah, but I didn’t know that. I was always a little bit behind. I was the only guy getting up in coffeehouses reading poetry when beatnik was all finished.”

“What did people do when you read your poetry?”

“How should I know? I was so into it I didn’t care. They’d clap politely—they were probably embarrassed. Then my parents wouldn’t let me go to Greenwich Village, but a coffeehouse opened in the town near mine, called MacDougal East, and there were these Long Island housewives who’d been beatniks when they were young.”

“That sounds so depressing.”

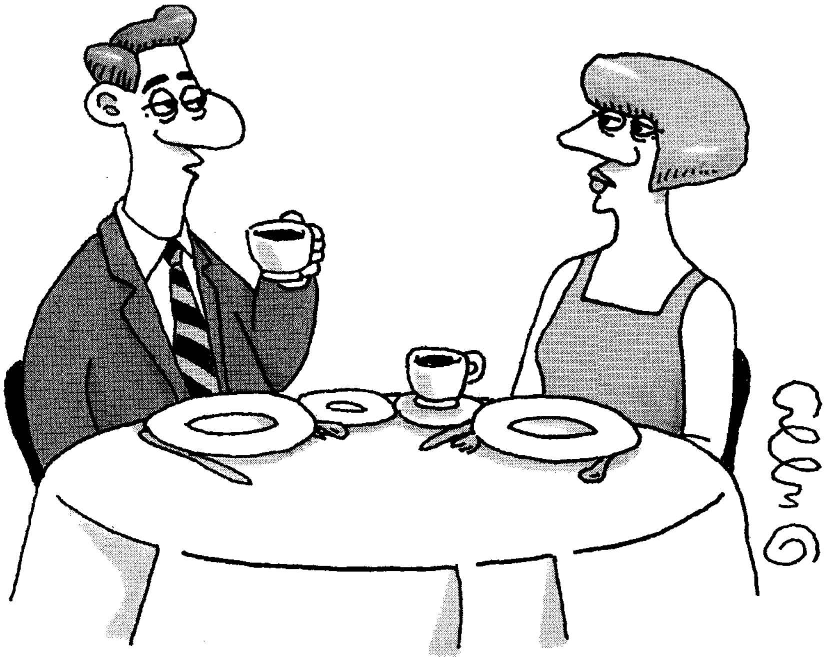
“It was a store and the window was the stage, but it was fun for me—I’d read poetry and play the bongos.”

“I wish I knew how you got from being the person you were in your high-school yearbook to the person you are now.”

“It has to do with transcendental meditation.”

“Do you look at that picture and say, ‘Oh, what a jerk I was then’?”

“I was naïve in a way, and I wasn’t. Anyhow, when I was seven my grandfather gave me a 16-mm. sound movie projector with sound movies and cartoons. My father would show them as a treat—the whole family would gather round to see them. We had Abbott and Costello, horror films, ‘The Mummy.’ So one day I ran the movie projector, and that meant we didn’t have to be dependent on my father. And word got round, and before I knew it I was asked to run the projector at other birthday parties, and they’d buy me a toy.”



“You make me want to be a better man, Olivia. Then maybe I could find somebody else.”

“What made them want you to do it? Was there some special way you did it?”

“You’re the *first person* who ever asked me these questions and they are *so stupid* I can’t believe it! *I was asked to run it because it was enjoyable, O.K.?* Now. Listen to this James Brown. My friends and I were the first to be into black soul stuff like this. And, if my memory does not fail, we were into the Rolling Stones before anyone else, too. Anyway, when I was fourteen I started being hired out to strangers’ houses. I’d show movies, do magic, play games, play guitar, I’d do things with the tape recorder.”

“Did anyone call it comedy?”

“Of course not! It wasn’t comedy. It was just playing with kids.”

“When did it get to be called comedy?”

“In college, when I did night clubs.”

“Who is that zombie voice you and Bob are always doing?”

“Norman. We can’t say who it is. He’s a paranoid schizophrenic, and if he finds out we’re doing him he’ll come and kill us. I want to cover some more points. Like every Monday night I work as a busboy at the Posh Bagel simply because I like the work.”

“The things I really want to know you won’t tell me.”

“Like what?”

“Like how you went from being a jerk to what you are now.”

“O.K. A jerk. The year after high school, everyone went to college and I didn’t. I drove a taxi and trucks. I drank heavily.”

“Were you very unhappy?”

“I was unhappy most of childhood. I had no confidence.”

“What did your parents think? Didn’t they want you to go to college?”

“They understood it might not be right for me. They understood *that.* But my father said, ‘You could do more with your life. You used to perform at children’s parties. You could do something with that.’ So I had pamphlets printed up—‘Uncle Andy’s Fun House.’ And then my friend said, ‘You should go on TV and become a children’s clown, like Bozo!’ So I put it together—I should go on TV as a clown and continue my party-entertainment business and get such a name that I’d have the biggest chil-

"We blew a fuse."

• •

dren's party-entertainment business in the world and franchise it and train people.

"So I went to this junior college that anyone could get into—it was all kids who were trying to keep out of the Vietnam War, not a real college. So, you see, it was so cold in Boston that I'd dress up in a shirt, a sweatshirt, a sweater, a jacket, a coat, a raincoat. Much like I dress now, but more so. And of course I've always been late for everything, so I'd be late for class. So I'd come in and I would just take off my layers of clothes one at a time and throw them on the floor—I'd stand there, I'd been running because I'm late, so I'd be panting, and I'd try not to be conspicuous, and people would watch me. After a few minutes, the whole class would be laughing. The teacher was a nice guy, he'd laugh, too. But he told me at the end of the semester, 'Don't stay in radio, because you're very visual.' I said, 'I'd like to be in TV, so I thought I'd major in radio so I could be a great disk jockey and work my way into TV.' He said, 'You know, Andy, if you want to be on *TV*, major in *TV*.' I said, 'Yeah!' I felt he taught me a great lesson: If you want to do something, do it, don't beat around the bush. So I majored in TV and started performing in front of grownups for the first time. I did Uncle Andy's Fun House."

"Did they think that was comedy?"

"No, they thought I was nuts. They would laugh at me. I realized that all my life I'd been laughed at, and I used to not like it, and that's why I was so unhappy. So I started using it. Not being laughed *with*, being laughed *at*. One day, I looked in the mirror and I had my hair parted in the middle and I had a mustache and I looked like an old-time comedian. All my life I'd been such a serious guy and never could tell a joke, and so I looked at myself in the mirror and said, 'Andy, *you* can be a *famous funnyman* if you would like.'

"Then, in college, these black guys were having a 'Soul Time' show and asked me to be in on it. They said, 'We want you to be the comedy relief.' Now, I had never *done comedy*, but they were laughing at me all the time on the street—I was their buffoon. So I decided, 'I'll imitate Elvis Presley and play the conga drums,' and that's what I did.

"I said to my friends, 'I'm gonna perform in a coffeehouse—imitate Elvis, play conga drums, sing "That's Amore,"' and they all laughed. Just doing Elvis in a coffeehouse was ludicrous. People thought I was serious—they'd look at me and say, 'Am I dreaming? Is he for real?' I was just doing what I did and they *loved* it. So I was asked back, and I came back with 'Mighty Mouse.' It was a song I'd been doing in my room for years, fantasizing doing it on a children's TV show. And it worked! They clapped for it, they laughed for it.

"Then, Foreign Man. One of those afternoons when I'd read my poetry and played the congas at the Café Wha?—I was fourteen—everyone in the place was so embarrassed by this other man there with this sort of Pakistani accent trying to do these terrible jokes. God, they were so bad, anecdotal jokes, and then he'd say, meekly and shyly, 'Vell, dat ees my story,' and no one would laugh, and then he'd say, 'Vell, dat ees all I vanted to say,' and still no laughter or applause—just dead silence and painful embarrassment, and then he'd say, 'Vell, tenk you vedy much.' My friend and I were hysterical. You know, quietly hysterical. When we got outside, we went crazy.

"So in college I saw that the audience wouldn't accept it if I started out with Elvis Presley. They were offended. They'd go, 'What, he thinks he's handsome or something?' I decided that my natural innocence—I'd lost it after the first few times I did my act—I thought I could be more innocent as the Foreign Man. Maybe I could get famous as a guy who speaks foreign and the only thing he does is Elvis Presley. So the first time I tried it, the whole act was Foreign Man, and when I got to the Elvis part I said, 'So now I vould like to do de Elvis Presley.' I could see that I was on the right track.

"The rest is history. I met Bob, and we'd share ideas—he's the only guy who thought like me. But before I'd ever met him I'd had the idea I'd take a gun out onstage and blow my brains out. I was seeing a psychiatrist since age three."

"Have you ever seen a good one?"

"How should I know? How can you write this? You don't know anything juicy about me. You don't know about the craziness, the insanity. You don't know the half of it. Anyway, you should read Hubert Selby, Jr. I know you say you hate his writing. It's poetry, each word is a masterpiece. Read 'The Demon.' I was flipping out as I was reading it. I was screaming with delight! That's my mind in a nutshell. I like horror movies. I like to be scared. I like the whole spectrum of emotions. I like to laugh, I like to cry. I don't think any sense of humor is funny. Did you like the way I had Robin Williams dressed up as my grandmother and sitting on the stage in the easy chair for the whole act at Carnegie Hall?"

"Yes, even if it wasn't Robin Williams."

"Trust me. It was Robin Williams. I'd tell you if it wasn't. Why do people not believe me?"

IN THE JAGUAR WITH MRS. KAUFMAN

ANDY'S mother agreed to meet me when she was in the city. A complicated plan was worked out. She was driving to New York with Andy's grandmother, Mr. Kaufman's mother, in order to drop her off at the apartment of the other grandmother, her mother. Then she and I would sit downstairs in her car, a brown Jaguar, since there were no legal parking spots.

Mrs. Kaufman introduced me to her mother-in-law and explained, "She's writing a story about Andy." Then I said, "I've been working on it for a year." The grandmother smiled and said, "With him you need a year."

In the Jaguar with Andy's mother, I asked her if she'd noticed anything unusual about him when he was a baby.

"Oh, he was *quite* unusual. At nine months of age, he used to pull himself up in his crib. And next to his crib was a dresser with a little Victrola and we used to buy children's records, and he couldn't turn it on and off but he could pull the plug out and put it back so we kept it on all the time and he'd use the plug to put it off or on. He put the records on himself. He was unbelievable."

"Did you think he must be pretty smart?"

"No, I didn't think anything. I just thought he liked records."

"Did you notice anything else when he was a baby?"

"He was always a loner. He was two when Michael was born, and then he would just stand and look out the window. It was a little heartbreaking.

"I had some peculiar ideas with Andy. It was tough taking care of him. My mother-in-law said to me, 'You know what I used to do with my son Jack, he was a wild one,' and Andy was wild, he was so cute, but he had a temper. One time, he ran out the door—no pants—and he was down the block before anyone could get him. He was always a fast runner. So my mother-in-law said, 'Tie him up with a rope,' and I tied him to a tree out front, and I took one look at him and he looked like a wild animal. And I couldn't stand it. I called a new pediatrician, and he said, 'Don't you ever tie a child up.'

"I had the strange idea that children are always supposed to be happy and smiling. So when Andy was four I took him to New York to a psychologist and he said Andy could use some play therapy. He should have been put ahead in school and not expected to do the ordinary normal things. He could have used a special school, for gifted children. I didn't think of it. And neither did anybody else. He went to psychologists until he was in college and found meditation. He was always an angry person, unhappy and impatient. It calmed him down."

"What happened when he started to do really well?"

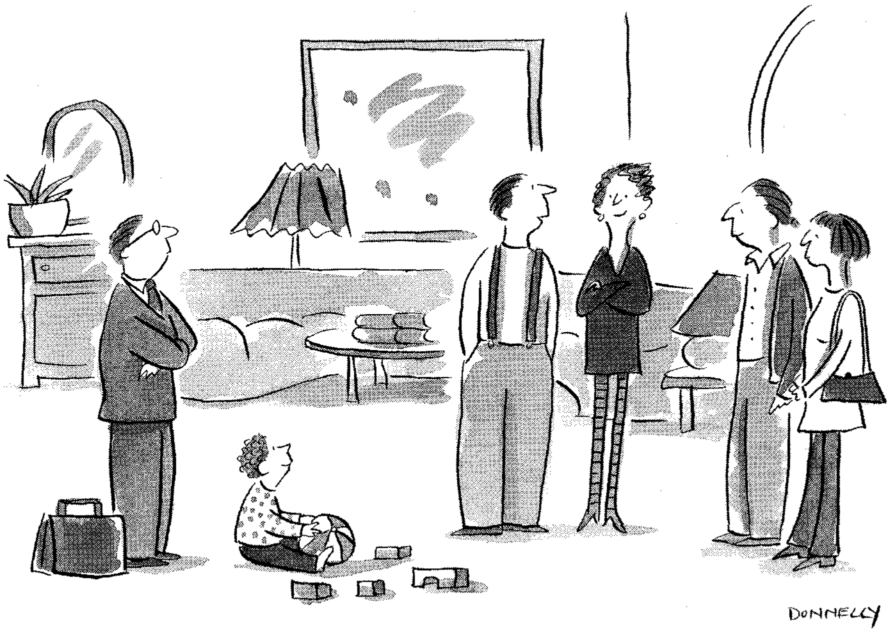
"Oh, he didn't do really well until just recently. He didn't get much encouragement from us. All the times he was knocking his brains out working for nothing . . ."

"What did you think he should be doing?"

"Well, we didn't know he was going to be this kind of a star. My feeling was, maybe he wants to go on Channel 13 with a little kiddie program. When he did the children's parties, he was given fifty cents once, and once a little gift. Then, when he was twelve, for five dollars he threw the whole party—he bought the favors and everything. Like at Carnegie Hall, giving the milk and cookies to the whole audience."

"When did you get an inkling that he'd be a big success?"

"You know, I can't tell you. The whole thing seems like a dream. The best part is that he's happy. When I used to drive him to the psychiatrist when he was twelve, thirteen, I'd say, 'What you do in life has to be what you love, wake up every day and say, "I can't wait to get to work." ' And now he has that. It's a dream come true." ♦

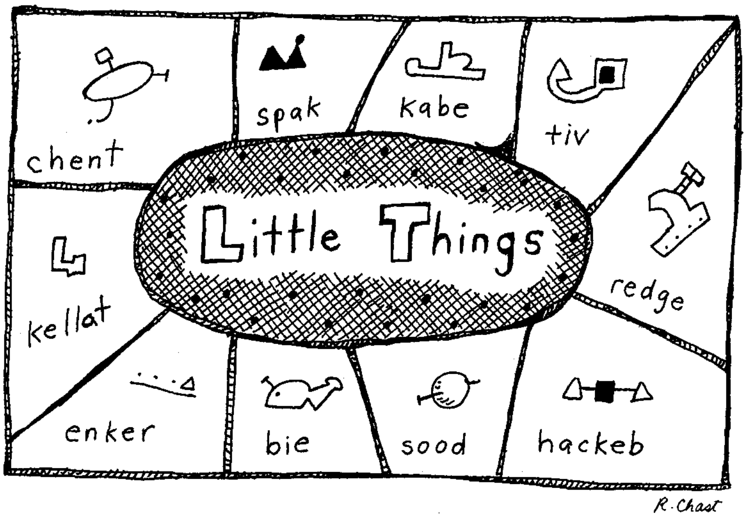


"He's talking now, but only through his attorney."

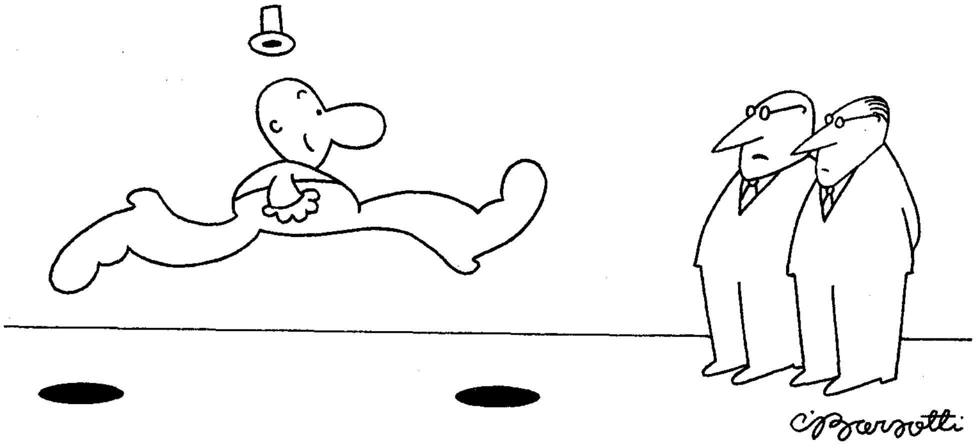
I DON'T GET IT!

The cartoon I.Q. test.

In this magazine's seventy-four-year existence, more than sixty thousand gag drawings, caricatures, and cartoons have been featured in its pages. Naturally, not all of these have been understood by all people all the time. In fact, a look through the mail indicates that among the stumped there's a special breed who—admitting to being "out of it" or possessed of "a ridiculous question" or in the throes of a "nothing-is-a-coincidence" frame of mind—still want answers. But humor is subjective, right? Not for the purposes of this page. Each of these cartoons has raised questions among our readers. For answers, we've turned to an unimpeachable source—the cartoonists. Can you guess what they had in mind?

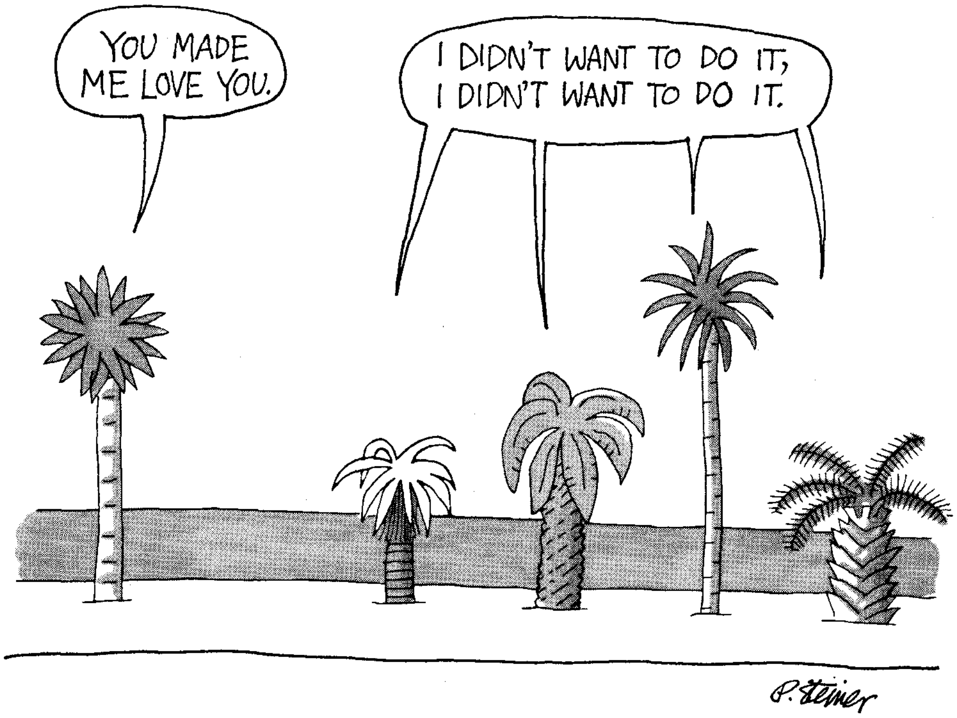


1) A. Rejected names for subatomic particles.
   B. European granola.
   C. Funny shapes with funny names.
   D. An early form of Braille.



"Hire him. You can't teach shadows like that."

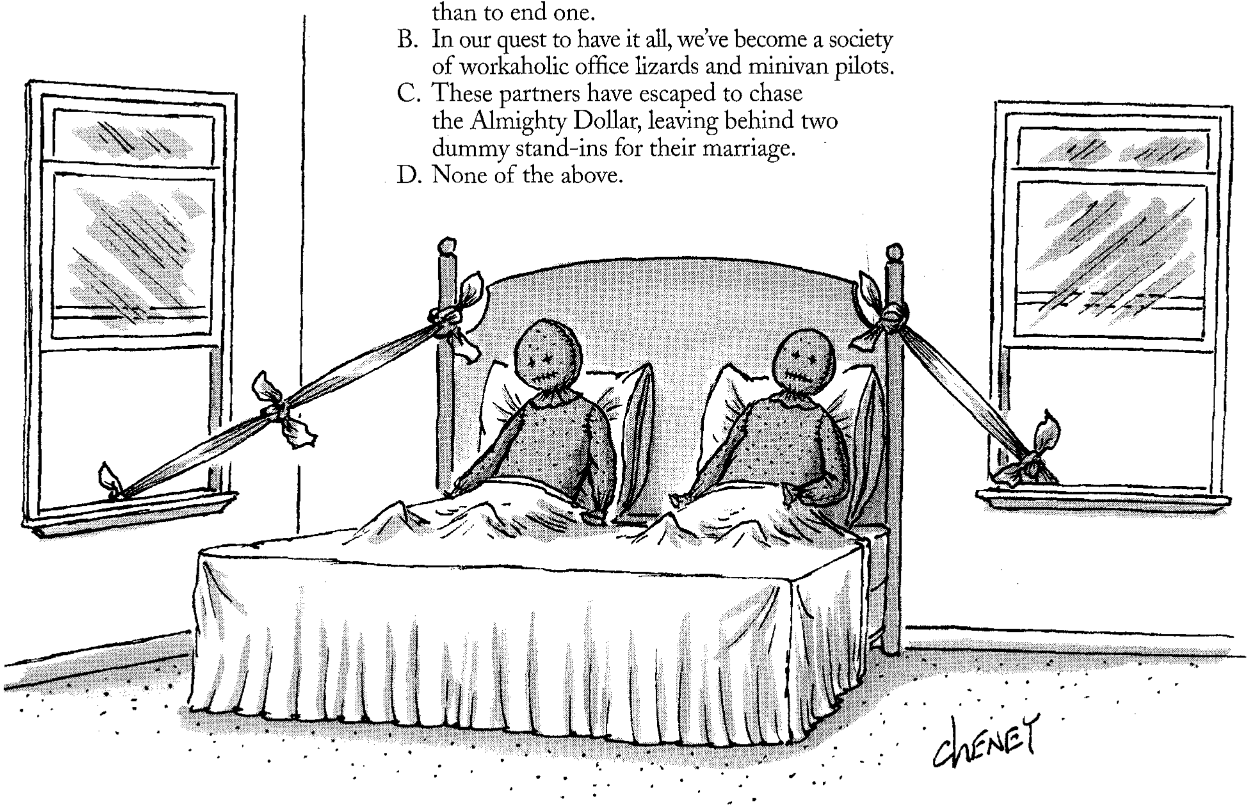
2) A. A man who casts two shadows will lead you.
   B. Corporations need vital and creative people.
   C. He will be assigned to a cubicle, and his spirit will die.
   D. If the executives had had their theological shoes on the right feet, they would have recognized that this was a sign of the End Times.


YOU MADE ME LOVE YOU.
I DIDN'T WANT TO DO IT, I DIDN'T WANT TO DO IT.

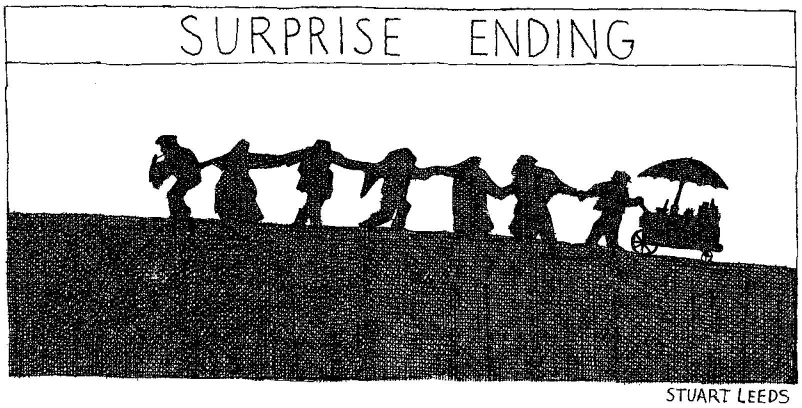
3) A. Illustrates the existential nexus where being and nothingness contrive to implicate love.
   B. Makes sense if you imagine that each palm tree is a businessman, and that instead of singing they are sitting around a large table imagining what they might order if it were lunchtime.
   C. Sometimes cartoons just can't be explained.
   D. A comment on the ecological devastation of the coconut.

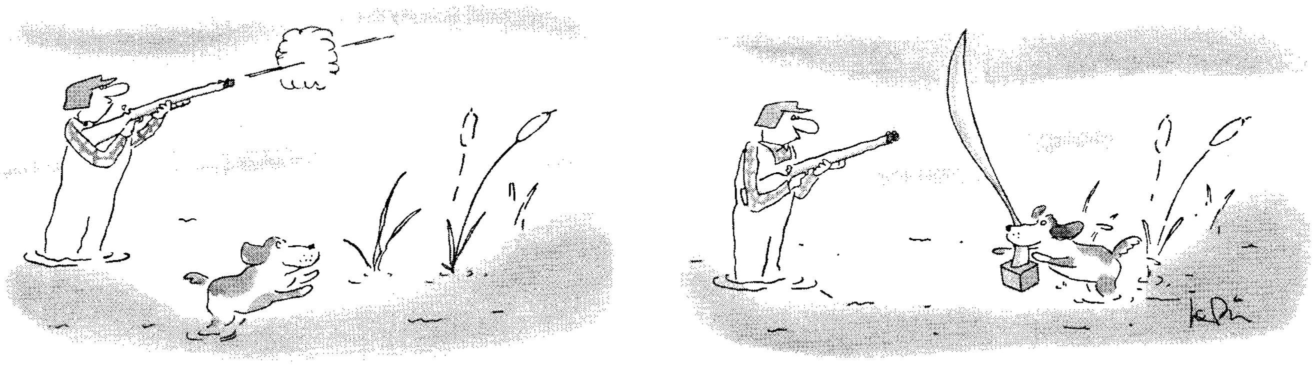
CHAST, 7/3/78; BARSOTTI, 9/21/91; STEINER, 2/4/85

4) A. It is infinitely easier to begin a marriage than to end one.
B. In our quest to have it all, we've become a society of workaholic office lizards and minivan pilots.
C. These partners have escaped to chase the Almighty Dollar, leaving behind two dummy stand-ins for their marriage.
D. None of the above.



5) A. A scene from a Bergman film in which the Grim Reaper has been replaced by a hot-dog vender.
B. Those New York hot dogs will absolutely kill you.
C. A chain gang being rewarded for a hard day's labor with a New York treat.
D. Puppets being led by their umbrella-wielding puppetmaster.





6) Which caption or phrase best explains this drawing:
A. Hey, bird dog, stay away from my art.
B. Leo Castelli's hunting expedition.
C. That dog can really fetch!
D. The hunter appears to have shot a bird, and the dog has, in fact, retrieved a bird—Brancusi's "Bird in Space."

The answers: (1) C, (2) B, (3) C, (4) C, (5) A, (6) D.

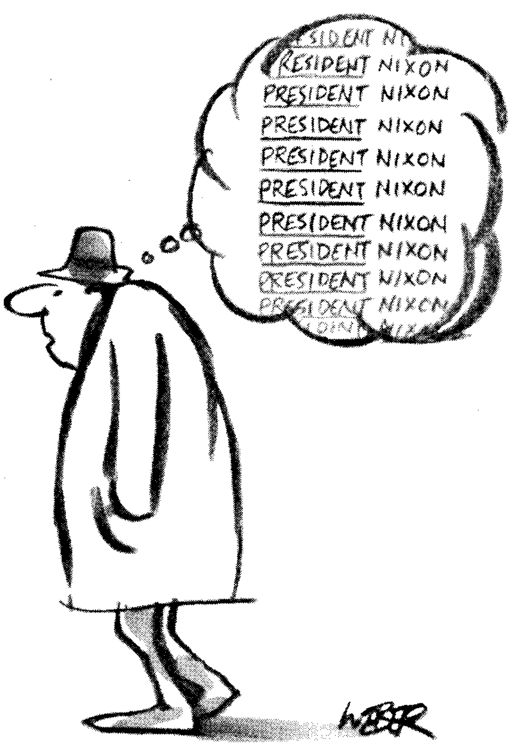
CHENEY, 8/23/99-8/30/99; LEEDS, 9/27/82; LEVIN, 5/7/90

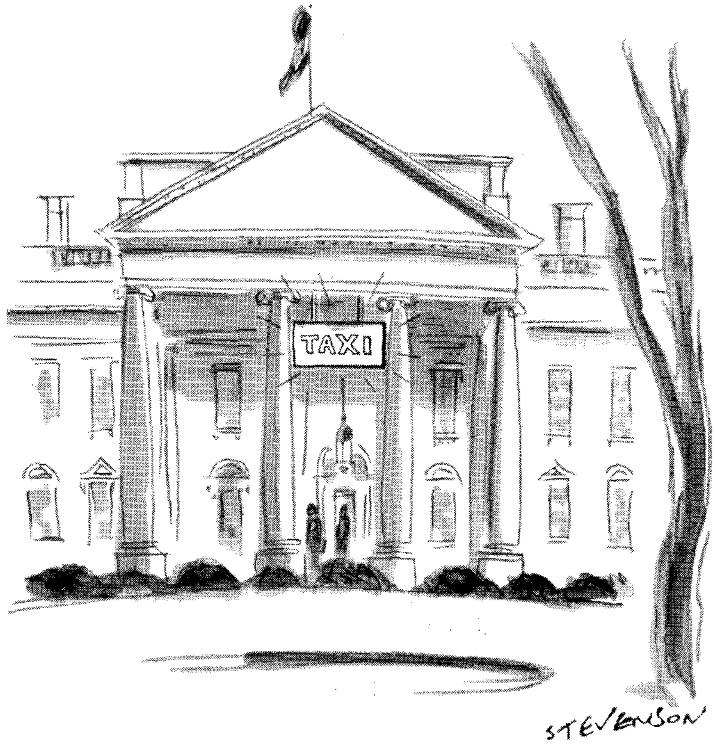
FROM THE ARCHIVES

CARTOON PRESIDENTS

They may run things in Washington, but they don't in Toondale.

BY HENDRIK HERTZBERG



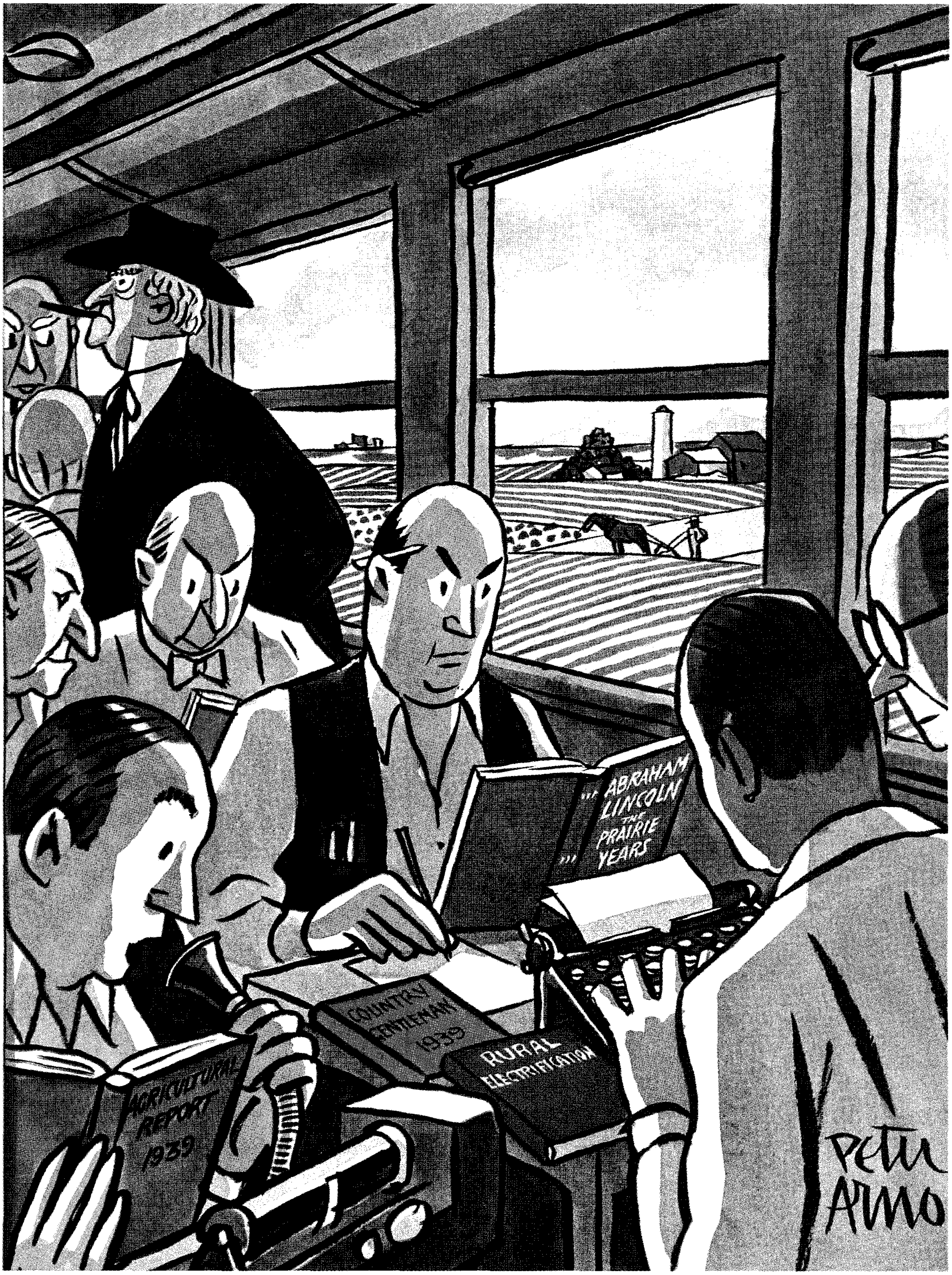


On the front pages of the nation's newspapers and in the marble halls of its capital, politicians—especially Presidents—rule. Our democratically elected leaders don't amount to much, though, in the parallel universe created by the men and women who draw cartoons for *The New Yorker*. This has nothing to do with snobbery. On the contrary, the relative absence of politics and its practitioners is one of the ways in which the world of *New Yorker* cartoons—Toondale, I'll call it, in order to avoid having to type "the world of *New Yorker* cartoons" over and over again—is in synch with God's country, which is to say with the Real America of mainstream, Main Street, down-to-earth regular people.

Toondale is a grassroots sort of place, even if the grass that grows there is rooted in the soil of Central Park or Greenwich. It's a domestic, private sort of place, as opposed to a public arena. It's a bottom-up sort of place, as opposed to a top-down one. In this sense, *New Yorker* cartoons, even when they're about politics, are the very opposite of those fixtures of editorial and op-ed pages known as "political" cartoons. The default mode of a political cartoon is a famous face (Bill Clinton's, Trent Lott's, Boris Yeltsin's) in a famous place (the White House, the Capitol, the Kremlin). The default mode of a *New Yorker* cartoon is more or less ordinary people (a couple, guys in shirtsleeves, a bum) in a more or less ordinary place (a living room, an office, a sidewalk). Even the non-ordinary precincts of Toondale—the heavenly clouds, the desert islands, the sulfurous pits of Hell—are generally populated by versions of Everyman and Everywoman. *New Yorker* cartoonists are not, on the whole, very good at drawing caricatures of political figures or other famous people; they don't do it often enough. What they are very good at is drawing caricatures of unfamous people: social types (bosses, girlfriends, yuppies, clubmen, barflies) expressing universal emotions (exasperation, bafflement, glee). On the rare occasions that a well-known politician turns up in Toondale, he usually looks stiff and out of place, even if he isn't Al Gore. In political cartoons, by contrast, the big shots are right at home, and it's John Q. Public who has a hard time loosening up.

According to a recent (last Tuesday afternoon) study conducted by the Cartoon Bank, the research-and-database-management wing of this magazine's far-flung pictorial-humor operation, only about three dozen of the more than sixty thousand cartoons the magazine has published since 1925—i.e., 0.0006 per cent, well within the margin of error—contain actual renderings of Presidents, and that includes Mt. Rushmore jokes, George Washington-and-the-cherry-tree jokes, and Lincoln stovepipe-hat jokes. The most fre-

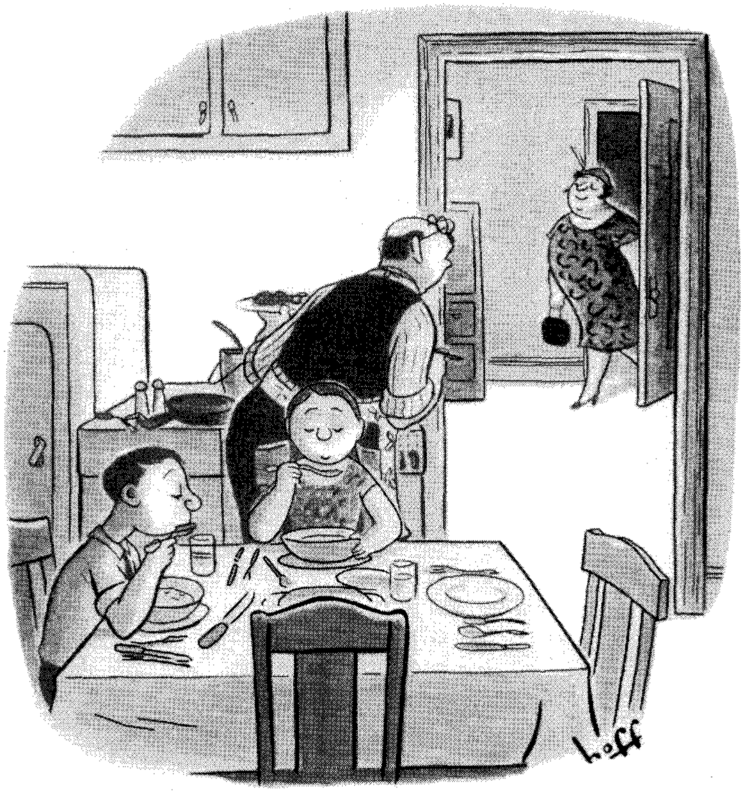
WEBER, 12/28/68; STEVENSON, 2/7/77; ARNO, 9/21/40


... ABRAHAM LINCOLN THE PRAIRIE YEARS ...
COUNTRY GENTLEMAN 1939
RURAL ELECTRIFICATION
AGRICULTURAL REPORT 1939
Peter Arno

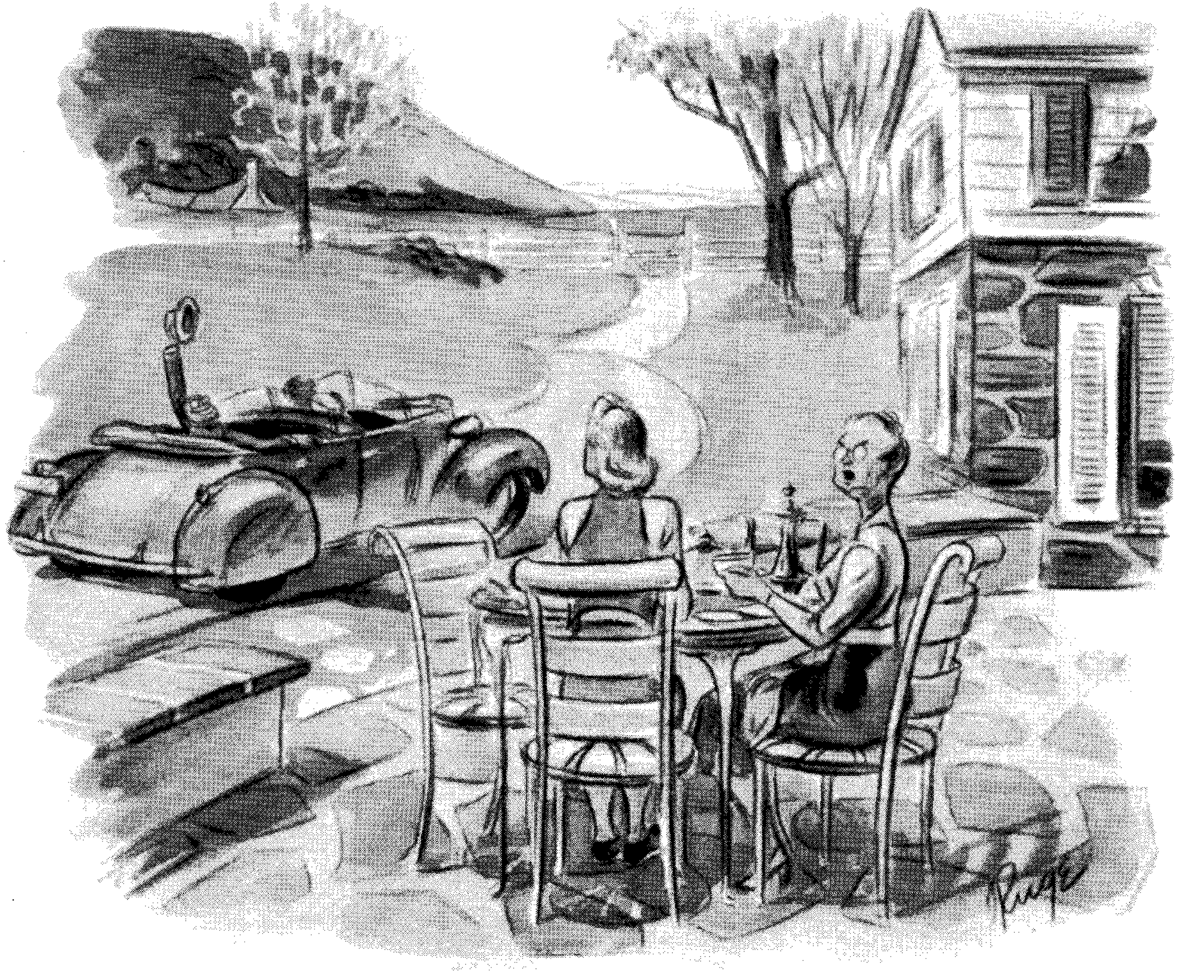
Reporters in the heartland: Peter Arno's cover drawing focusses on the periphery of the 1940 campaign.

quently pictured twentieth-century President, Bill Clinton, has appeared eight times. Quantitatively, this is pitiful compared with, say, the number of cartoons depicting Zeus flinging thunderbolts (eighteen), dogs in saloons (twenty-five), or angels on clouds (a hundred and fifty). And let's not even talk about people on psychoanalysts' couches (three hundred eighty-one and counting).

So much for statistics. What about the substance of politics in Toondale? Before me sits a three-inch pile of Xeroxes—a fairly complete collection of Toondale's forays into politics, Presidential and otherwise. What is striking about these cartoons is how amiable, not to say toothless, most of them are. This is especially true of the ones from the early years of the magazine. In those innocent days, it was taken for granted that Presidents would be treated with a certain minimal respect, even when they were being made fun of. It didn't hurt, of course, that the President during most of those early years was Franklin D. Roosevelt.

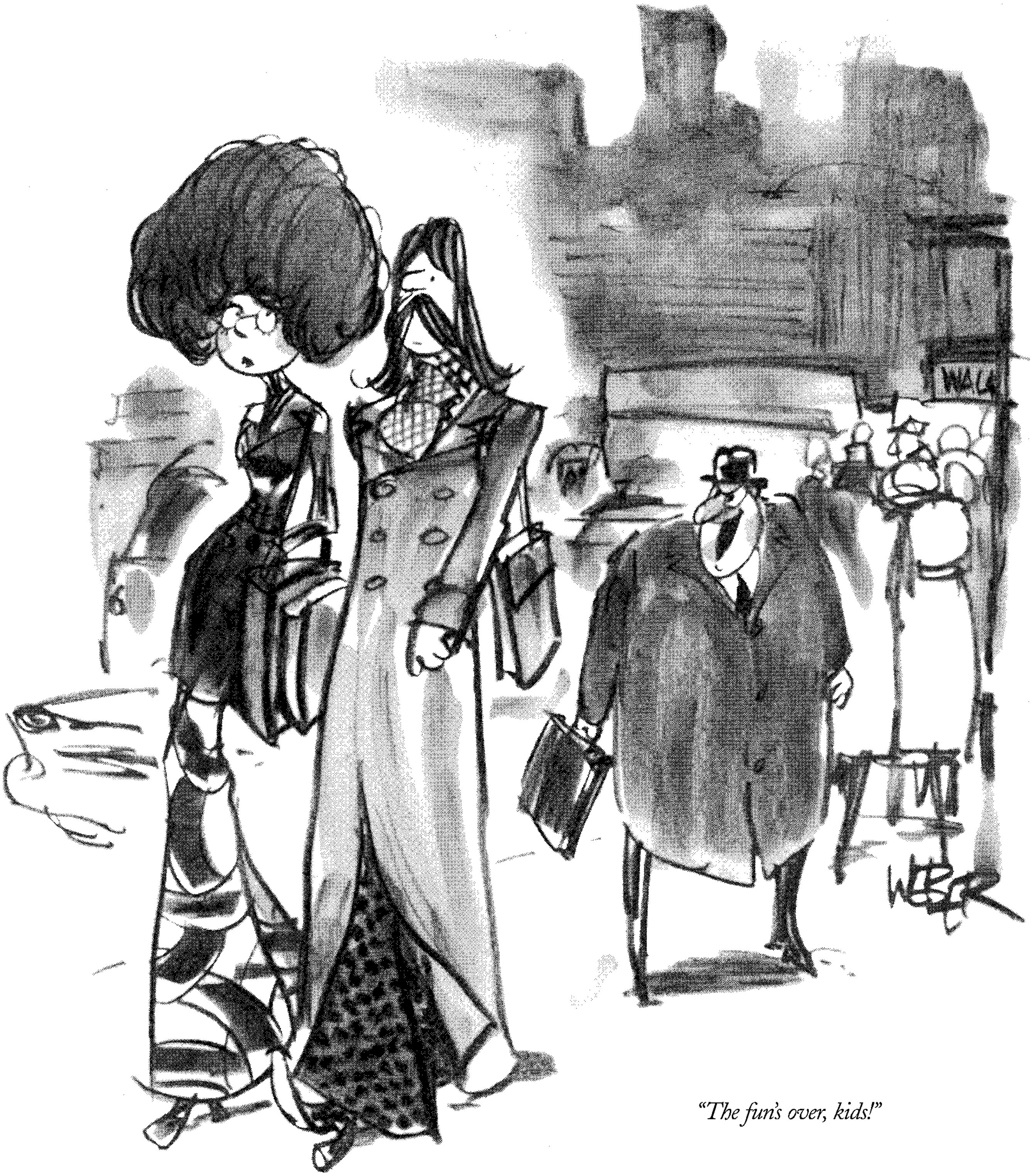


"Well, good evening, Mrs. Roosevelt!"



"I could kill you for telling him he looks like Roosevelt!"

HOFF, 8/3/40; RUGE, 6/10/39



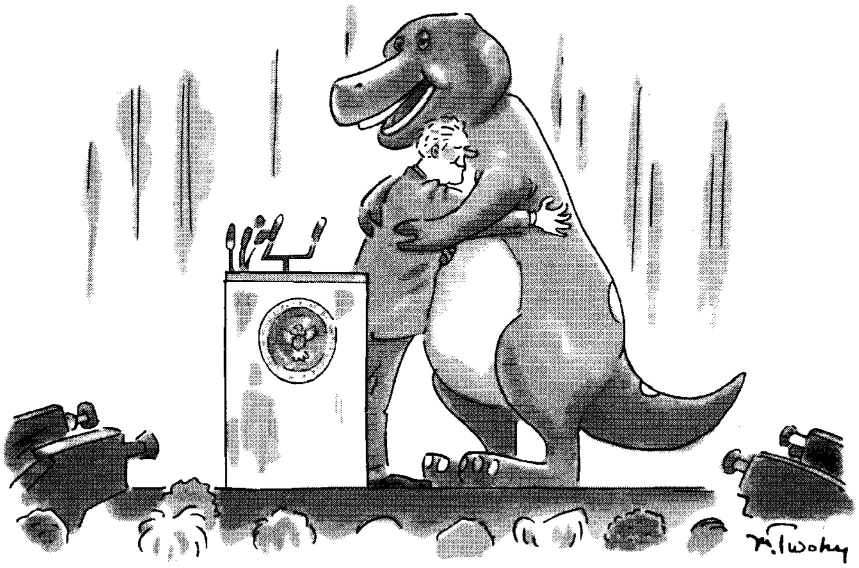
"The fun's over, kids!"

WEBER, 12/2/72

The first President to be pictured in a *New Yorker* cartoon was Calvin Coolidge; the second was Herbert Hoover, but the star of that cartoon was actually F.D.R. It's late November, 1932, shortly after Hoover's landslide defeat for re-election. As drawn by Carl Rose, the lame-duck President is sitting wanly at his desk, his chubby neck encased in his trademark celluloid collar, aimless doodles on the papers in front of him. "Hello, Governor Roosevelt," he is saying into the telephone. "You haven't got a good idea for a Thanksgiving proclamation, have you?"

Toondale loved the Roosevelts, Franklin and Eleanor alike. Two instances of that love are remembered by nearly everybody who was alive and sentient during the nineteen-thirties. A 1933 Robert Day drawing affectionately celebrated the First Lady's affinity for the downtrodden. A couple of coal miners, deep underground, turn around in startlement, the lights on their miners' caps cutting through the dusty gloom. "For gosh sakes," one says to the other, "here comes Mrs. Roosevelt!" And in a famous Peter Arno cartoon that ran in the fall of 1936, one of a clump of rich, well-fed Manhattanites, out for an evening on the town in tuxedos and mink stoles, calls to an identical group in a brownstone window, "Come along. We're going to the Trans-Lux to hiss Roosevelt"—the Trans-Lux being a movie theatre devoted to newsreels, the CNN of its day.

The theme of rich people and other old grumps disapproving of F.D.R. was a common one. "Louise voted for Roosevelt, and now she's afraid to tell her husband," one society matron tells another in a 1940 Barbara Shermund cartoon. "Don't keep saying 'God forbid' every time I mention Mr. Roosevelt," a Thurber wife admonishes her tiny husband in 1938. And in a 1936 full-page William Crawford Galbraith, a sugar daddy wheedles his languid mistress with a promise: "And if Roosevelt is not reelected, perhaps even a villa in Newport, my dearest sweet."



PRESIDENT CLINTON EXCHANGES HUGS WITH HIS NEW VIOLENCE CZAR

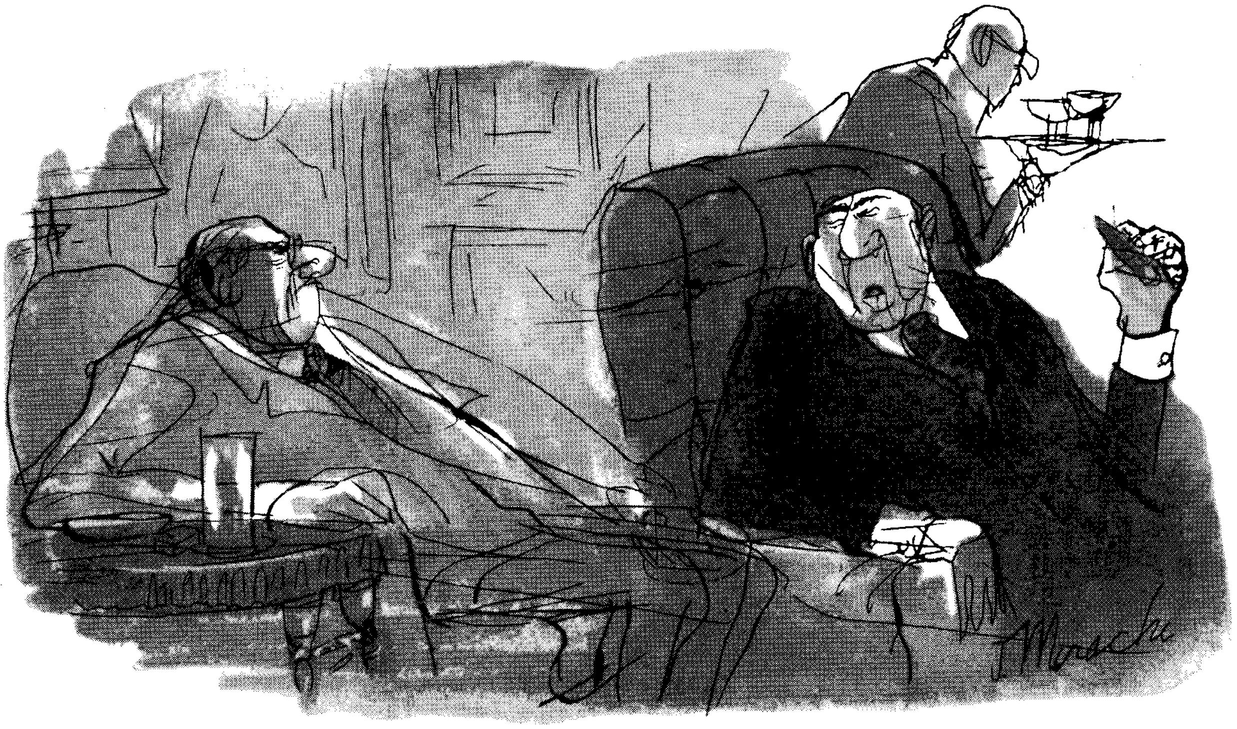
From the twenties through the mid-sixties, the President, whoever he may be, is usually somewhere in the background—a cultural signifier seen from a respectful distance, through the lens of some (usually) likable personal quirk, such as Harry Truman's piano playing ("I'll bet President Truman never acted this way," a piano teacher tells a sullen pupil, in a 1945 Perry Barlow drawing) or Eisenhower's fondness for quail hunting ("Guess who took a pot shot at yours truly over at George Humphrey's place the other day," one bird boasts to another in a 1958 Frank Modell). The maddeningly unforgettable campaign slogan "I Like Ike" was squeezed dry in Toondale. Panhandler to prosperous gent, in a 1956 William O'Brian cartoon: "Not only that, sir, but I like the men around him." In a Chon Day that same year, lapel-button-wearing patient to shrink: "I don't know—sometimes I get the feeling he doesn't like *me*." (As recently as 1990, a young woman in a William Hamilton cartoon is saying to an older man, "Did you like Ike and all that?")

The cartoons began to grow baby teeth in 1968, when Robert Weber, in the drawing reproduced on page 166 (left), tried to get used to the whole bizarre idea of Richard Nixon in the White House. The teeth got longer, if not all that much sharper, as the culture war intensified. "Would you care to join your Daddy and me in a toast to Tricia and her young man?" a cluelessly hopeful mom asks her sullen, bearded, long-haired son in a 1971 James Stevenson drawing. Just after Nixon's one-sided reëlection victory, a Weber businessman taunted a modishly dressed couple (page 169). By 1972, when the Joseph Mirachi cartoon on the opposite page (top) was published, a Nixonian smog so permeated the cultural atmosphere that names, faces, and overt references were superfluous. Everybody knew that Charles Barsotti was mocking the circumlocutions of Watergate when, in 1973, he drew a tipsy husband explaining to his wife, "I misdrank myself."

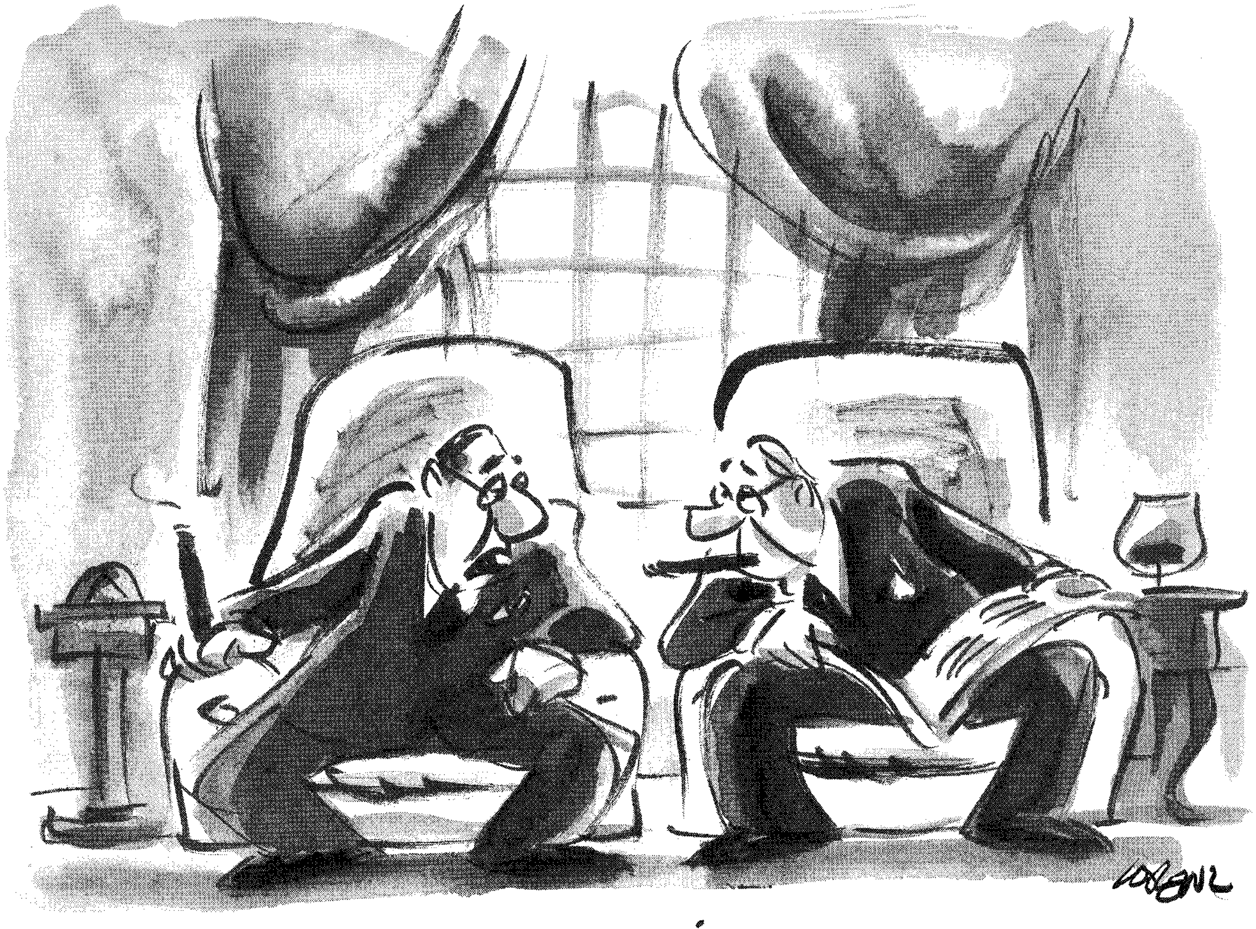
Toondale has had a good time with the Kennedy family's fecundity, Gerald Ford making his own breakfast, Jimmy Carter's ostentatious modesty (page 166, right), Ronald Reagan's rhetorical exaggerations, George Bush's thousand points of light, and Bill Clinton's mushy empathy (above). But the cartoons with real political bite tend to zero in on their targets in wildly indirect ways. In a 1982 Lee Lorenz, a terrifying-looking chieftain throws bones to his snarling dogs while a courtier murmurs to a colleague, "I, too, was alarmed when he took over, but I think events will inevitably push him back into the political mainstream." Similarly, in a 1995 Arnie Levin, one barbarian warrior remarks to another, "He's mellowed quite a bit over the years. However, that's become a signature thing with him." The burning city around them is festooned with severed heads on spikes. Cartoons like these transcend the topical.

Every once in a while, Toondale has managed to get ahead of the political curve. Back when Lyndon Johnson was still President and Ronald Reagan was in his first term as governor of California, Dana Fradon got Reagan's number with a drawing in which a spare-change artist, suddenly noticing that his mark is wearing a Reagan button, exclaims, "Oh! I beg your pardon!" But there is such a thing as being too prescient. More in a spirit of intra-office fun than out of any real expectation of making a sale, Lee Lorenz submitted the cartoon on the opposite page (bottom) just after the 1996 election. The editors, once they brought their laughter under control, quite properly rejected it, on the grounds that (a) its premise relied upon vague and unverified rumor and (b) its language was a bit too—well, a bit too vivid. Fourteen months later, Kenneth Starr's deputies busted Monica Lewinsky, setting in motion a train of events that eventually led to the Starr report and the elevation of fellatio to a question of the gravest constitutional significance. As a matter of documentary and historical interest, therefore, we publish Lorenz's drawing here for the first time, complete with its original caption in the artist's distinctive script. To every thing, even in Toondale, there is a season. ◆

TWOHY, 7/26/93; OPPOSITE TOP: MIRACHI, 10/7/72



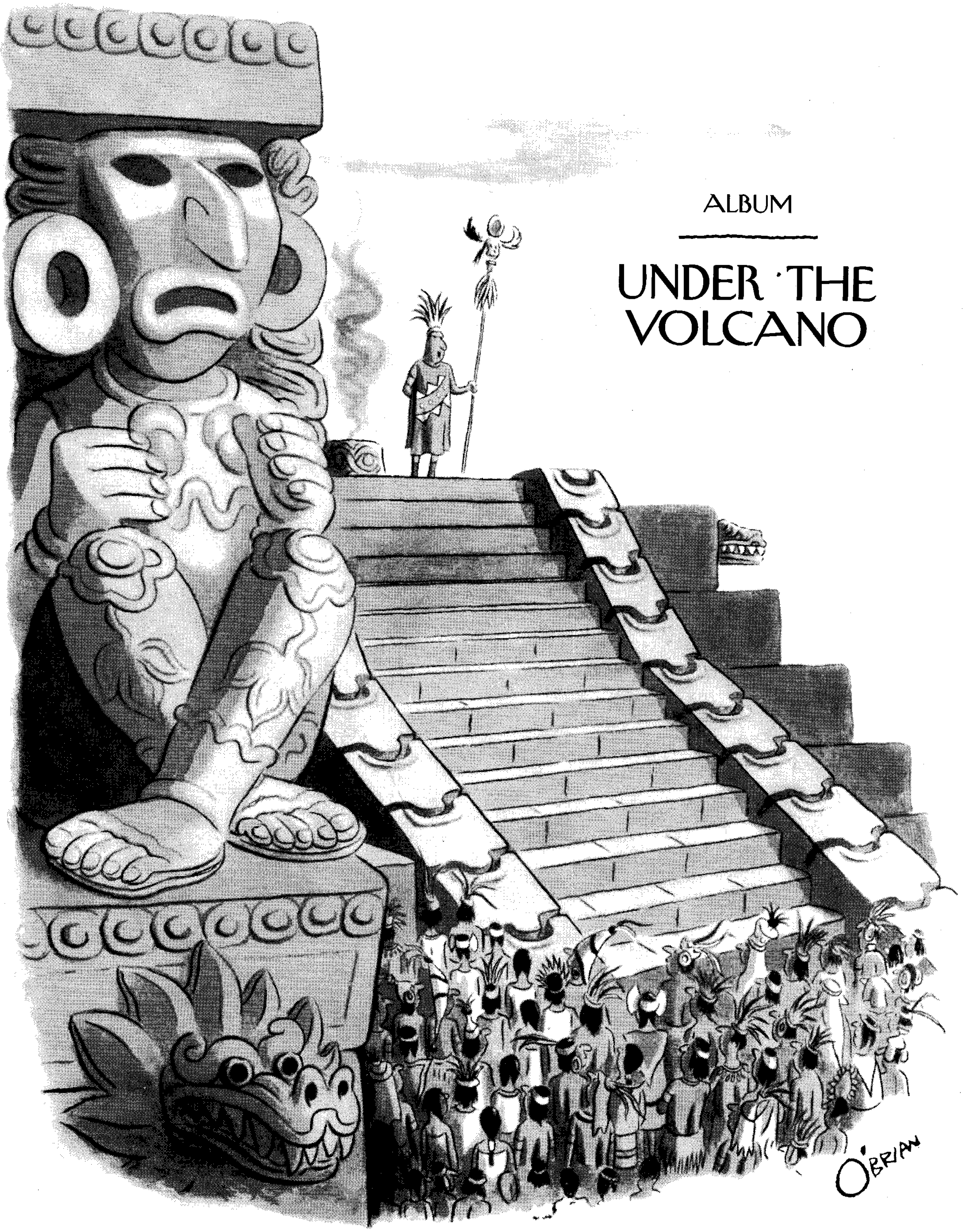
"All right, so he isn't a lovable man. Am I a lovable man? Are you a lovable man?"



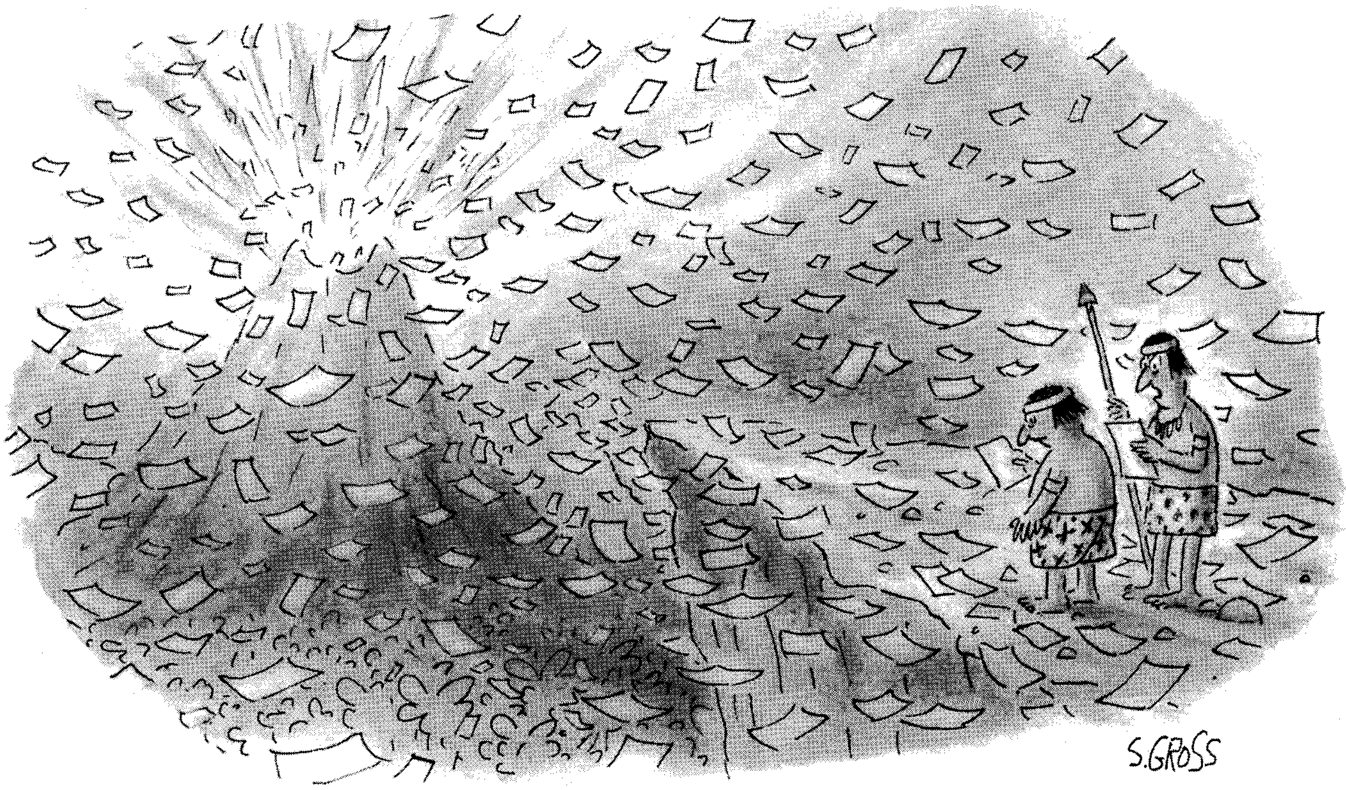
"ACTUALLY, I DON'T THINK DOLE'S ADMINISTRATION WOULD HAVE BEEN MUCH DIFFERENT FROM CLINTON'S — EXCEPT, OF COURSE, FOR THE BLOW JOBS."

ALBUM

UNDER·THE VOLCANO



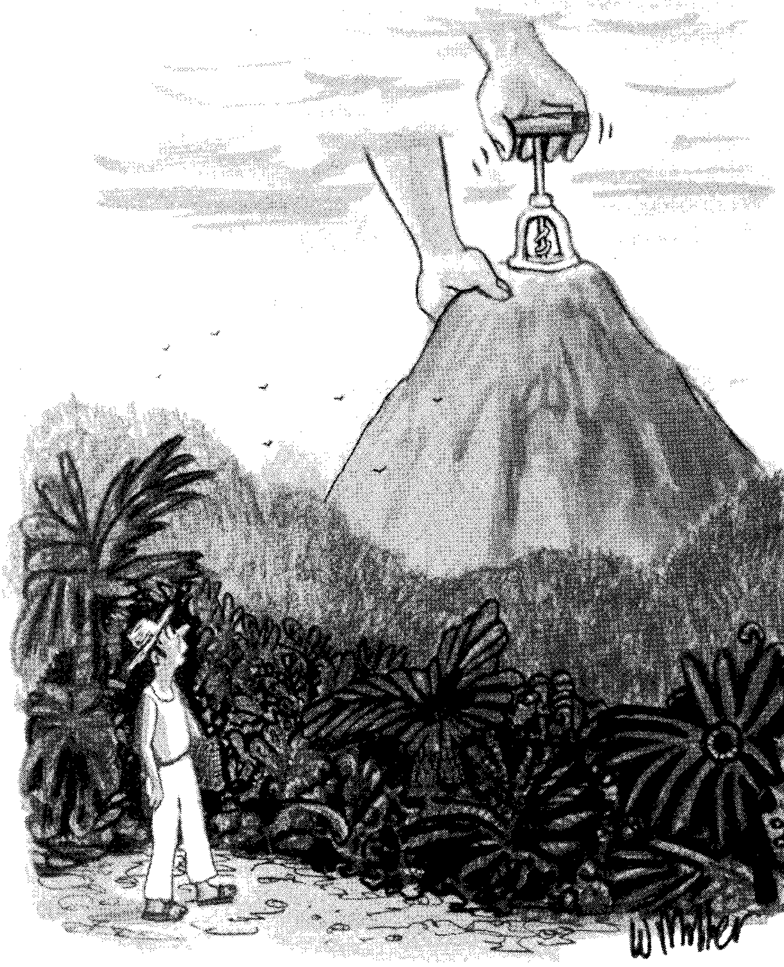
"Your contributions to the fund for the new wing to the High Priests' Tabernacle have been gratefully received. The Passion Fruit Festival was well attended, and we thank those Virgins who gave of their time to make it a success. Keep up the good work, Virgins. For the young marrieds there will be a meeting at the volcano's edge at the next full moon."



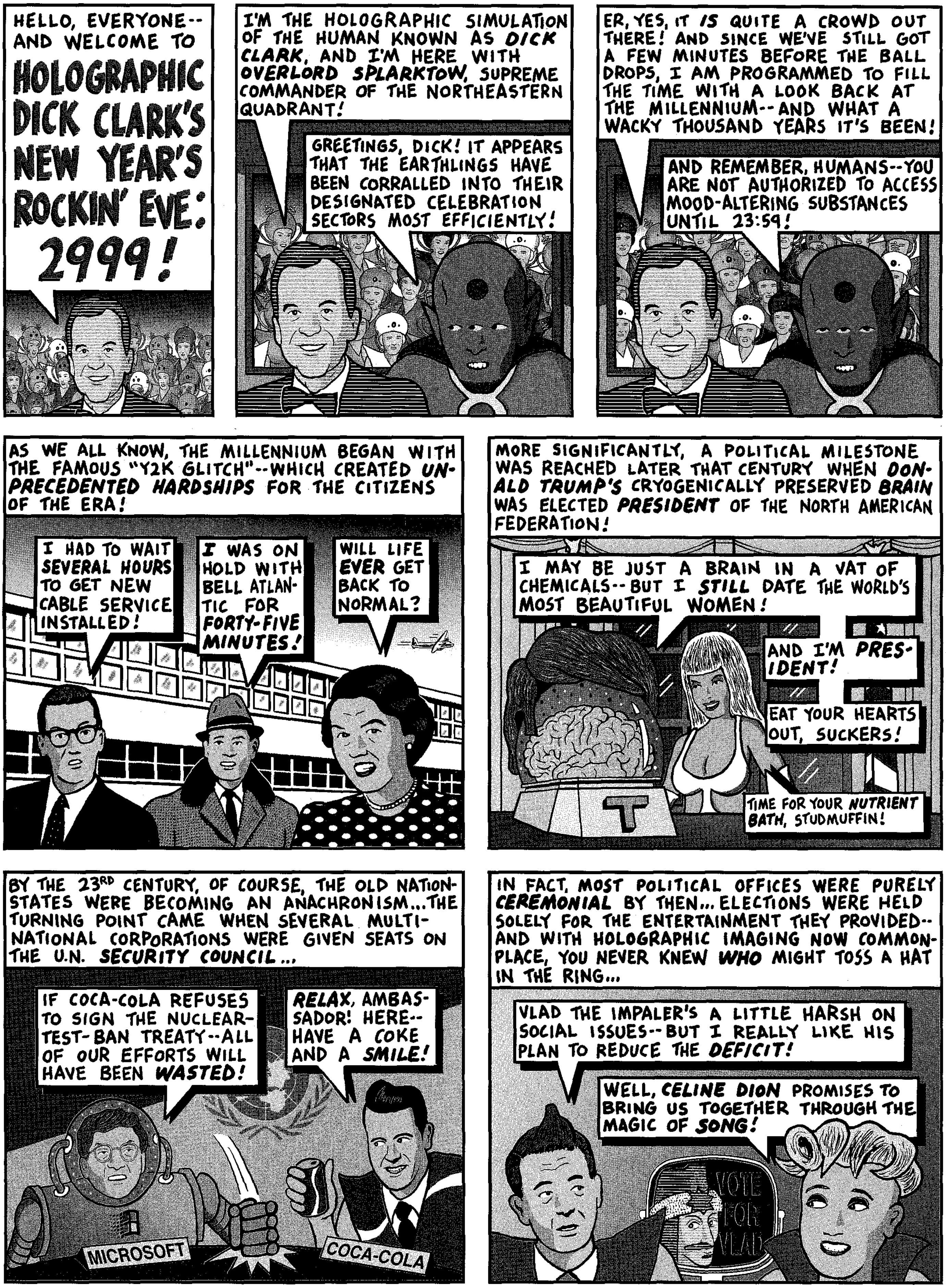
"The gods are distributing Chinese menus."

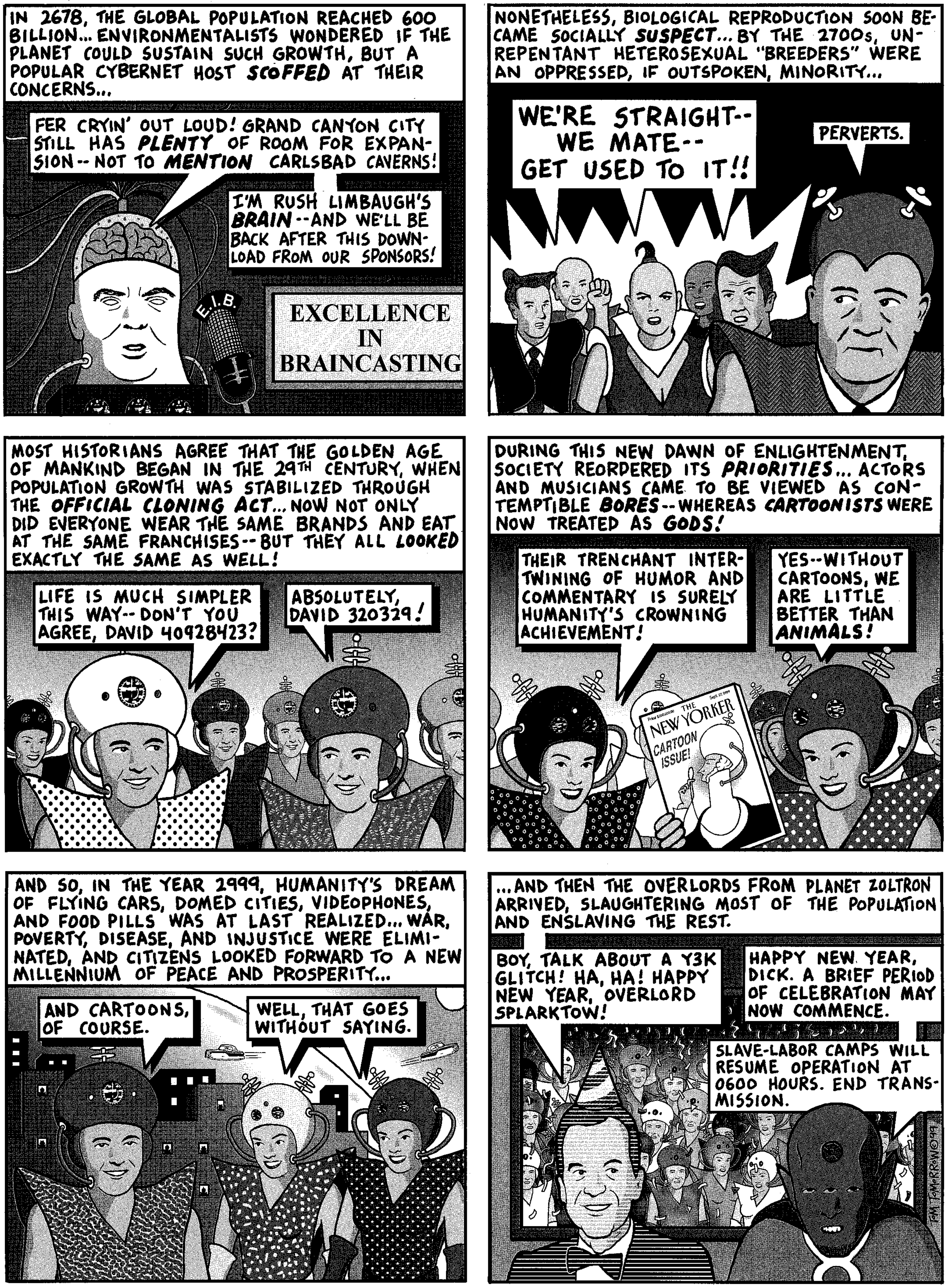
The smoldering debate between Darwinians and creationists has once more erupted. The central issue, obscured by the rhetorical smoke and ash, can be stated simply: Did cartooning as we know it evolve slowly or was it created in a single week by Harold Ross back in 1925? In support of the latter position, creationists point to embarrassing gaps in the fossil record: where are the progenitors of Peter Arno's mysterious Whoops! Sisters, and just how did the boneless figures of James Thurber sprout from the branching tree of mankind? For Darwinians, the cartoon's ability to adapt to shifting circumstances validates evolutionary theory. Experts consider the survival of the volcano cartoon—a.k.a. the gods are angry—a textbook case of such mechanisms at work.

Early examples of the genre, like William O'Brian's 1963 Meso-American study (at left), demonstrate an ethnic specificity that is increasingly hazardous in these awareness-heightened times. Over the next thirty years, the form mutated into the culturally ambiguous, typified by Warren Miller's drawing (at right). But it was Sam Gross who completed the transformation, by cross-pollinating the concerns of contemporary urban life with a clearly mythical setting. No amount of argument is likely to change the minds of true believers. For the rest of us, the larger question remains: Will the world end in a bang or merely a gentle shower of unsolicited food-delivery options? —Lee Lorenz



OPPOSITE: O'BRIAN, 7/13/63; GROSS, 3/1/93; MILLER, 7/24/95


HELLO, EVERYONE-- AND WELCOME TO
HOLOGRAPHIC DICK CLARK'S NEW YEAR'S ROCKIN' EVE: 2999!
I'M THE HOLOGRAPHIC SIMULATION OF THE HUMAN KNOWN AS DICK CLARK, AND I'M HERE WITH OVERLORD SPLARKTOW, SUPREME COMMANDER OF THE NORTHEASTERN QUADRANT!
GREETINGS, DICK! IT APPEARS THAT THE EARTHLINGS HAVE BEEN CORRALLED INTO THEIR DESIGNATED CELEBRATION SECTORS MOST EFFICIENTLY!
ER, YES, IT IS QUITE A CROWD OUT THERE! AND SINCE WE'VE STILL GOT A FEW MINUTES BEFORE THE BALL DROPS, I AM PROGRAMMED TO FILL THE TIME WITH A LOOK BACK AT THE MILLENNIUM--AND WHAT A WACKY THOUSAND YEARS IT'S BEEN!
AND REMEMBER, HUMANS--YOU ARE NOT AUTHORIZED TO ACCESS MOOD-ALTERING SUBSTANCES UNTIL 23:59!
AS WE ALL KNOW, THE MILLENNIUM BEGAN WITH THE FAMOUS "Y2K GLITCH"--WHICH CREATED UNPRECEDENTED HARDSHIPS FOR THE CITIZENS OF THE ERA!
I HAD TO WAIT SEVERAL HOURS TO GET NEW CABLE SERVICE INSTALLED!
I WAS ON HOLD WITH BELL ATLANTIC FOR FORTY-FIVE MINUTES!
WILL LIFE EVER GET BACK TO NORMAL?
MORE SIGNIFICANTLY, A POLITICAL MILESTONE WAS REACHED LATER THAT CENTURY WHEN DONALD TRUMP'S CRYOGENICALLY PRESERVED BRAIN WAS ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE NORTH AMERICAN FEDERATION!
I MAY BE JUST A BRAIN IN A VAT OF CHEMICALS--BUT I STILL DATE THE WORLD'S MOST BEAUTIFUL WOMEN!
AND I'M PRESIDENT!
EAT YOUR HEARTS OUT, SUCKERS!
T
TIME FOR YOUR NUTRIENT BATH, STUDMUFFIN!
BY THE 23RD CENTURY, OF COURSE, THE OLD NATION-STATES WERE BECOMING AN ANACHRONISM... THE TURNING POINT CAME WHEN SEVERAL MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS WERE GIVEN SEATS ON THE U.N. SECURITY COUNCIL...
IF COCA-COLA REFUSES TO SIGN THE NUCLEAR-TEST-BAN TREATY--ALL OF OUR EFFORTS WILL HAVE BEEN WASTED!
RELAX, AMBASSADOR! HERE--HAVE A COKE AND A SMILE!
MICROSOFT
COCA-COLA
IN FACT, MOST POLITICAL OFFICES WERE PURELY CEREMONIAL BY THEN... ELECTIONS WERE HELD SOLELY FOR THE ENTERTAINMENT THEY PROVIDED--AND WITH HOLOGRAPHIC IMAGING NOW COMMONPLACE, YOU NEVER KNEW WHO MIGHT TOSS A HAT IN THE RING...
VLAD THE IMPALER'S A LITTLE HARSH ON SOCIAL ISSUES--BUT I REALLY LIKE HIS PLAN TO REDUCE THE DEFICIT!
WELL, CELINE DION PROMISES TO BRING US TOGETHER THROUGH THE MAGIC OF SONG!
VOTE FOR VLAD


IN 2678, THE GLOBAL POPULATION REACHED 600 BILLION... ENVIRONMENTALISTS WONDERED IF THE PLANET COULD SUSTAIN SUCH GROWTH, BUT A POPULAR CYBERNET HOST *SCOFFED* AT THEIR CONCERNS...
FER CRYIN' OUT LOUD! GRAND CANYON CITY STILL HAS *PLENTY* OF ROOM FOR EXPANSION--NOT TO *MENTION* CARLSBAD CAVERNS!
I'M RUSH LIMBAUGH'S *BRAIN*--AND WE'LL BE BACK AFTER THIS DOWNLOAD FROM OUR SPONSORS!
E.I.B.
EXCELLENCE IN BRAINCASTING
NONETHELESS, BIOLOGICAL REPRODUCTION SOON BECAME SOCIALLY *SUSPECT*... BY THE 2700s, UNREPENTANT HETEROSEXUAL "BREEDERS" WERE AN OPPRESSED, IF OUTSPOKEN, MINORITY...
WE'RE STRAIGHT--WE MATE--GET USED TO IT!!
PERVERTS.
MOST HISTORIANS AGREE THAT THE GOLDEN AGE OF MANKIND BEGAN IN THE 29TH CENTURY, WHEN POPULATION GROWTH WAS STABILIZED THROUGH THE *OFFICIAL CLONING ACT*... NOW NOT ONLY DID EVERYONE WEAR THE SAME BRANDS AND EAT AT THE SAME FRANCHISES--BUT THEY ALL *LOOKED* EXACTLY THE SAME AS WELL!
LIFE IS MUCH SIMPLER THIS WAY--DON'T YOU AGREE, DAVID 40928423?
ABSOLUTELY, DAVID 320329!
DURING THIS NEW DAWN OF ENLIGHTENMENT, SOCIETY REORDERED ITS *PRIORITIES*... ACTORS AND MUSICIANS CAME TO BE VIEWED AS CONTEMPTIBLE *BORES*--WHEREAS *CARTOONISTS* WERE NOW TREATED AS *GODS!*
THEIR TRENCHANT INTERTWINING OF HUMOR AND COMMENTARY IS SURELY HUMANITY'S CROWNING ACHIEVEMENT!
YES--WITHOUT CARTOONS, WE ARE LITTLE BETTER THAN *ANIMALS!*
THE NEW YORKER
Sept. 27, 1999
CARTOON ISSUE!
AND SO, IN THE YEAR 2999, HUMANITY'S DREAM OF FLYING CARS, DOMED CITIES, VIDEOPHONES, AND FOOD PILLS WAS AT LAST REALIZED... WAR, POVERTY, DISEASE, AND INJUSTICE WERE ELIMINATED, AND CITIZENS LOOKED FORWARD TO A NEW MILLENNIUM OF PEACE AND PROSPERITY...
AND CARTOONS, OF COURSE.
WELL, THAT GOES WITHOUT SAYING.
...AND THEN THE OVERLORDS FROM PLANET ZOLTRON ARRIVED, SLAUGHTERING MOST OF THE POPULATION AND ENSLAVING THE REST.
BOY, TALK ABOUT A Y3K GLITCH! HA, HA! HAPPY NEW YEAR, OVERLORD SPLARKTOW!
HAPPY NEW YEAR, DICK. A BRIEF PERIOD OF CELEBRATION MAY NOW COMMENCE.
SLAVE-LABOR CAMPS WILL RESUME OPERATION AT 0600 HOURS. END TRANSMISSION.
TOM TOMORROW©99

FICTION

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF ELAINE COLEMAN

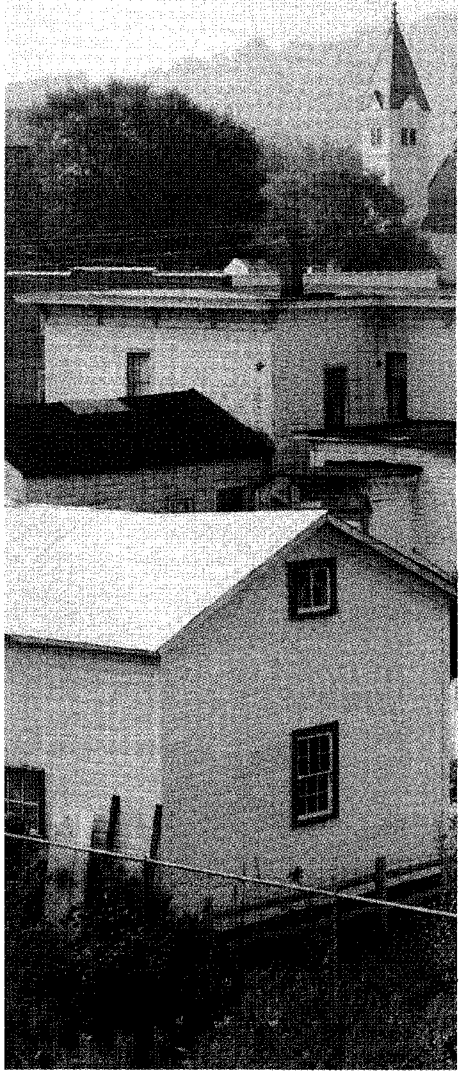
BY STEVEN MILLHAUSER

THE news of the disappearance disturbed and excited us. For weeks afterward, the blurred and grainy photograph of a young woman no one seemed to know, though some of us vaguely remembered her, appeared on yellow posters displayed on the glass doors of the post office, on telephone poles, on windows of the C.V.S. and the renovated supermarket. The small photo showed a serious face turned partly away, above a fur collar; the picture seemed to be an enlargement of a casual snapshot, perhaps originally showing a full-length view—the sort of picture, we imagined, taken carelessly by a bored relative with a borrowed camera to commemorate an occasion. For a time women were warned not to go out alone at night, while the investigation pursued its futile course. Gradually the posters became rain-wrinkled and streaked with grime, the blurred photos seemed to be fading away, and then one day they were gone, leaving behind a faint uneasiness that itself dissolved slowly in the smoke-scented autumn air.

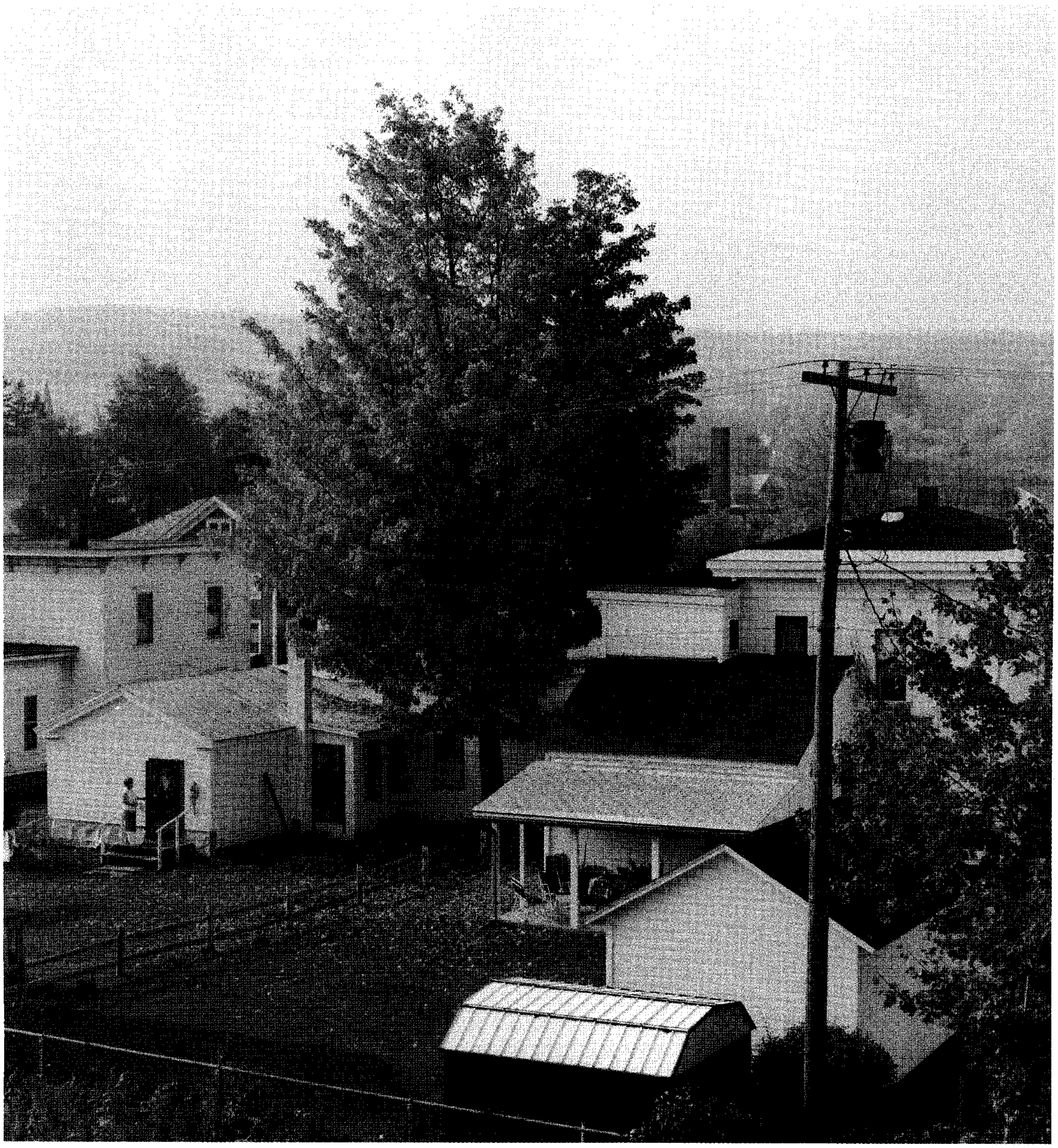
According to the newspaper reports, the last person to see Elaine Coleman alive was a neighbor, Mrs. Mary Blessington, who greeted her on the final evening as Elaine stepped out of her car and began to walk along the path of red slates leading to the side entrance of the house on Willow Street where she rented two rooms on the second floor. Mary Blessington was raking leaves. She leaned on her rake, waved to Elaine Coleman, and remarked on the weather. She noticed nothing unusual about the quiet young woman walking at dusk toward the side door, carrying in one arm a small paper bag (probably containing the quart of milk found unopened in her refrigerator) and holding her keys in the other hand. When questioned further about Elaine Coleman's appearance as she walked toward the house, Mary Blessington admitted that it was almost dark and that she couldn't make her out "all that well." The landlady, Mrs. Waters, who lived on the first floor and rented upstairs rooms to two boarders, described Elaine Coleman as a quiet person, steady, very polite. She went to bed early, never had visitors, and paid her rent unfailingly on the first of the month. She liked to stay by herself, the landlady added. On the last evening, Mrs. Waters heard Elaine's footsteps climbing the stairs as usual to her apartment on the second floor in back. The landlady did not actually see her on that occasion. The next morning, she noticed the car still parked in front, even though it was a Wednesday and Miss Coleman never missed a day of work. In the afternoon, when the mail came, Mrs. Waters decided to carry a letter upstairs to her boarder, who she assumed was sick. The door was locked. She knocked gently, then louder and louder, before opening the door with a duplicate key. She hesitated a long time before calling the police.

For days we spoke of nothing else. We read the newspapers ardently, the local *Messenger* and the papers from neighboring towns; we studied the posters, we memorized the facts, we interpreted the evidence, we imagined the worst.

The photograph, bad and blurry though it was, left its own sharp impression: a woman caught in the act of looking away, a woman evading scrutiny. Her eyes were half closed, the



turned-up collar of her jacket concealed the line of her jaw, and a crinkled strand of hair came straggling down over her cheek. She looked, though it was difficult to tell, as if she had hunched her shoulders against the cold. But what struck some of us about the photograph was what it seemed to conceal. It was as if beneath that grainy cheek, that blurred and narrow nose with the skin pulled tight across the bridge, lay



PHILIP S. BLOCK, "MARATHON, NY"

some other, younger, more familiar image. Some of us recalled dimly an Elaine, an Elaine Coleman, in our high school, a young Elaine of fourteen or fifteen years ago, who had been in our classes, though none of us could remember her clearly or say where she sat or what she did. I myself seemed to recall an Elaine Coleman in English class, sophomore or junior year, a quiet girl, someone I hadn't paid much attention to. In my old yearbook I found her: Elaine Coleman. I did not recognize her face. At the same time, it didn't seem the face of a stranger. It appeared to be the missing woman on the poster, though in another key, so that you didn't make the connection immediately. The photograph was slightly overexposed, making her seem a little washed out, a little flat—there was a bright indistinctness about her. She was neither pretty nor unpretty. Her face was half turned away, her expression serious; her hair, done up in the style of the time, showed the shine of a careful combing. She had joined no clubs, played no sports, belonged to nothing.

The only other photograph of her was a group picture of our homeroom class. She stood in the third row from the front, her body turned awkwardly

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to one side, her eyes lowered, her features difficult to distinguish.

In the early days of her disappearance, I kept trying to remember her, the dim girl in my English class who had grown up into a blurred and grainy stranger. I seemed to see her sitting at her maple-wood desk beside the radiator, looking down at a book, her arms thin and pale, her brown hair falling partly behind her shoulder and partly before, a girl in a long skirt and white socks, but I could never be certain I wasn't making her up. One night I dreamed her: a girl with black hair who looked at me gravely. I woke up oddly stirred and relieved, but as I opened my eyes I realized that the girl in my dream was Miriam Blumenthal, a witty and laughing girl with blazing black hair, who in dream-disguise had presented herself to me as the missing Elaine.

One detail that troubled us was that Elaine Coleman's keys were discovered on the kitchen table, beside an open newspaper and a saucer. The key ring with its six keys and its silver kitten, the brown leather pocketbook containing her wallet, the fleece-lined coat on the back of a chair—all this suggested a sudden and disturbing departure, but it was the keys that attracted our particular attention, for they included the key to her apartment. We learned that the door could be locked in two ways: from the inside, by turning a knob that turned a bolt, and from the outside, with a key. If the door was locked and the key inside, then Elaine Coleman cannot have left by the door—unless there was a second key. It was possible, though no one believed it, that someone with a second key had entered and left through her door, or that Elaine herself, using a second key, had left by the door and locked it from the outside. But a thorough police investigation discovered no record of a duplicate key. It seemed far more likely that she had left by one of the four windows. Two were in the kitchen-living room, facing the back, and two in the bedroom, facing the back and side. In the bathroom, there was a small, fifth window, no more than twelve inches in height and width, through which it would have been impossible to enter or exit. Directly below the four main windows grew a row of hydrangea and rhododendron bushes. All four windows were closed, though not locked, and the storm windows were in place. It seemed necessary to imagine that Elaine Coleman had deliberately escaped through a second-floor window, fifteen feet up in the air, when she might far more easily have left by the door, or that an intruder had entered through a window and carried her off, taking care to pull both panes back into place. But the bushes, grass, and leaves below the four windows showed no trace of disturbance, nor was there any evidence in the rooms to suggest a break-in.

The second boarder, Mrs. Helen Ziolkowski, a seventy-year-old widow who had lived in the front apartment for twenty years, described Elaine Coleman as a nice young woman, quiet, very pale, the sort who kept to herself. It was the first we had heard of her pallor, which lent her a certain allure. On the last evening, Mrs. Ziolkowski heard the door close and the bolt turn in the lock. She heard the refrigerator door open and close, light footsteps moving about, a dish rattling, a teapot whistling. It was a quiet house and you could hear a lot. She had heard no unusual sounds, no screams, no voices, nothing at any time that might have suggested a struggle. In fact, it had been absolutely silent in Elaine Coleman's apartment from about seven o'clock on; she had been surprised not to hear the usual sounds of dinner being prepared in the kitchen. She herself had gone to bed at eleven o'clock. She was a light sleeper and was up often at night.

I wasn't the only one who kept trying to remember Elaine Coleman. Others who had gone to high school with me, and who now lived in our town with families of their own, remained puzzled or uncertain about who she was, though no one doubted she had actually been there. One of us thought he recalled her in biology, junior year, bent over a frog fastened to the black wax of a dissecting pan. Another recalled her in English class, senior year, not by the radiator but at the back of the room—a girl who didn't say much, a girl with uninteresting hair. But though he remembered her clearly, or said he did, there at the back of the room, he could not remember anything more about her; he couldn't summon up any details.

One night, about three weeks after the disappearance, I woke from a troubling dream that had nothing to do with Elaine Coleman—I was in a room without windows, there was a greenish light, some frightening force was gathering behind the closed door—and sat up in bed. The dream itself no longer upset me, but it seemed to me that I was on the verge of recalling something. In startling detail, I remembered a party I had gone to when I was fifteen or sixteen. I saw the basement playroom very clearly: the piano with sheet music open on the rack, the shine of the piano lamp on the white pages and on the stockings of a girl sitting in a nearby armchair, the striped couch, some guys in the corner playing a child's game with blocks, the cigarette smoke, the bowl of pretzel sticks—and there on a hassock near the window, leaning forward a little, wearing a white blouse and a long dark skirt, her hands in her lap, Elaine Coleman. Her face was sketchy—dark hair some shade of brown, grainy skin—and not entirely to be trusted, since it showed signs of having been infected by the photograph of the missing Elaine, but I had no doubt that I had remembered her.

I tried to bring her into sharper focus, but it was as if I hadn't looked at her directly. The more I tried to recapture that evening, the more sharply I was able to see details of the basement playroom (my hands on the chipped white piano keys, the green and red and yellow blocks forming a higher and higher tower, someone on the swim team moving his arms out from his chest as he demonstrated the butterfly, the dazzling knees of Lorraine Palermo in sheer stockings), but I could not summon Elaine Coleman's face.

According to the landlady, the bedroom showed no signs of disturbance. The pillow had been removed from under the bedclothes and placed against the headboard. On the nightstand, a cup half filled with tea rested on a postcard announcing the opening of a new hardware store. The bedspread was slightly rumpled; on it lay a white flannel nightgown printed with tiny pale-blue flowers and a fat paperback resting

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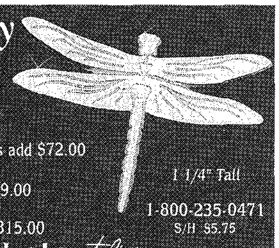

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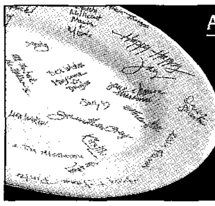

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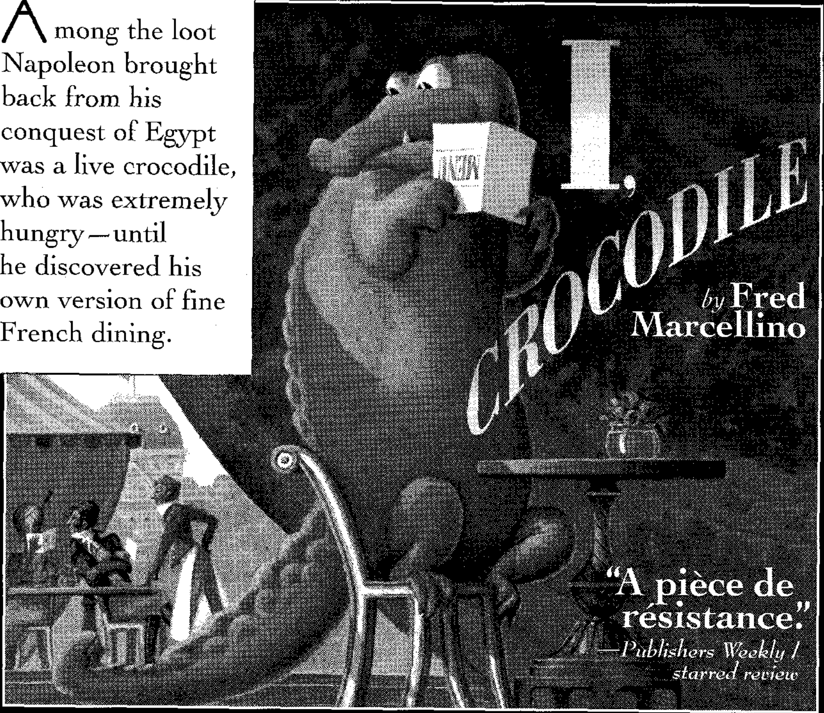

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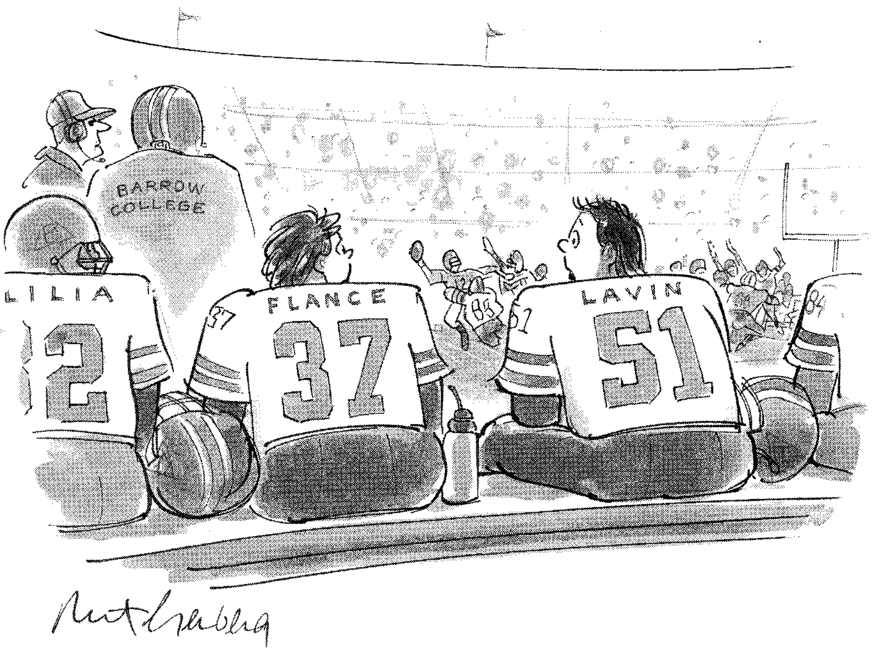
open against the spread. The lamp on the nightstand was still on.

We tried to imagine the landlady in the bedroom doorway, her first steps into the silent room, the afternoon sunlight streaming in past the closed venetian blinds, the pale, hot bulb in the sun-streaked lamp.

The newspapers reported that Elaine Coleman had gone on from high school to attend a small college in Vermont, where she majored in business and wrote one drama review for the school paper. After graduation, she lived for a year in the same college town, waitressing at a seafood restaurant; then she returned to our town, where she lived for a few years in a one-room apartment before moving to the two-room apartment on Willow Street. During her college years, her parents had moved to California, from where the father, an electrician, moved alone to Oregon. "She didn't have a mean bone in her body," her mother was quoted as saying. Elaine worked for a year on the local paper, part-timed in a paint store, worked in the post office and a coffee shop, before getting a job in a business-supply store in a neighboring town. People remembered her as a quiet woman, polite, a good worker. She seemed to have no close friends.

I now recalled catching glimpses of a half-familiar face during summers home from college, and later, when I returned to town and settled down. I had long ago forgotten her name. She would be standing at the far end of a supermarket aisle, or on line in a drugstore, or disappearing into a store on Main Street. I noticed her without looking at her, as one might notice a friend's aunt. If our paths crossed, I would nod and pass by, thinking of other things. After all, we had never been friends, that woman and I—we had never been anything. She was someone I'd gone to high school with, that was all, someone I scarcely knew, though it was also true that I had nothing against her. Was it really the missing Elaine? Only after her disappearance did those fleeting encounters seem pierced by a poignance I knew to be false, though I couldn't help feeling it anyway, for it was as if I ought to have stopped and talked to her, warned her, saved her, done something.

My second vivid memory of Elaine Coleman came to me three days after



"I can't decide whether to turn pro first or go directly into rehab."

• •

my memory of the party. It was sometime in high school, and I was out walking with my friend Roger on one of those sunny autumn afternoons when the sky is so blue and clear that it ought to be summer, but the sugar maples have turned red and yellow, and smoke from leaf fires stings your eyes. We had gone for a long walk into an unfamiliar neighborhood on the other side of town. Here the houses were small, with detached garages; on the lawns you saw an occasional plastic yellow sunflower or fake deer. Roger was talking about a girl he was crazy about, who played tennis and lived in a fancy house on Gideon Hill, and I was advising him to disguise himself as a caretaker and apply for a job trimming her rosebushes. "The yard move," I said. "It gets 'em every time." "She would never respect me," Roger answered seriously. We were passing a garage where a girl in jeans and a dark parka was tossing a basketball into a hoop without a net. The garage door was open and you could see old furniture inside, couches with lamps lying on them and tables holding upside-down chairs. The basketball hit the rim and came bouncing down the drive toward us. I caught it and tossed it back to the girl, who had started after it but had stopped upon seeing us. I recognized Elaine Coleman. "Thanks," she said, holding the basketball in two hands and hesitating a moment before she lowered her eyes and turned away.

What struck me, as I remembered that afternoon, was the moment of hesitation. It might have meant a number of things, such as "Do you and Roger want to shoot a few?" or "I'd like to invite you to shoot a basket but I don't want to ask you if you don't really want to" or maybe something else entirely, but, in that moment, which seemed charged with uncertainty, Roger glanced sharply at me and mouthed a silent "No." What troubled my memory was the sense that Elaine had seen that look, that judgment; she must have been skilled at reading dismissive signs. We walked away into the blue afternoon of high autumn, talking about the girl on Gideon Hill, and in the clear air I could hear the sharp, repeated sound of the basketball striking the driveway as Elaine Coleman walked back toward the garage.

Is it true that whatever has once been seen is in the mind forever? After my second memory I expected an eruption of images, as if they had only been waiting to reveal themselves. In senior year of high school, I must have seen her every day in English class and homeroom, must have passed her in the halls and seen her in the cafeteria, to say nothing of the inevitable chance meetings in the streets and stores of a

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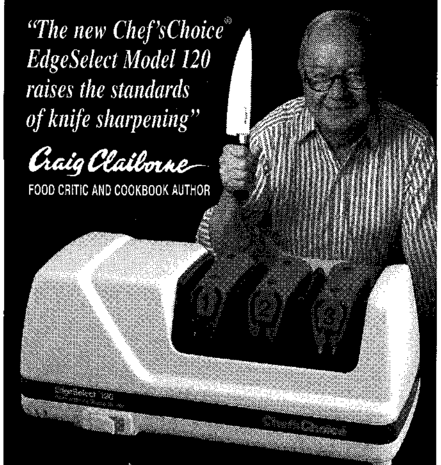

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small town, but aside from the party and the garage I could summon no further image, not one. Nor could I see her face. It was as if she had no face, no features. Even the three photographs appeared to be of three different people, or perhaps they were three versions of a single person no one had ever seen. And so I returned to my two memories, as if they contained a secret that only intense scrutiny could bring to light. But though I saw, always more clearly, the chipped yellowish-white keys of the piano, the glittering stockings, the blue autumn sky, the sun glinting into the shadowy garage with its chairs and tables and boxes, though I saw, or seemed to see, the scuffed black loafer and white ribbed sock of a foot near the piano and the sparkling black shingles on the garage roof, I could not see more of Elaine Coleman than I had already remembered: the hands in the lap, at the party; the moment of hesitation, in the driveway.

During the first few weeks, when the story still seemed important, the newspapers located someone named Richard Baxter, who worked in a chemical plant in a nearby town. He had last seen Elaine Coleman three years ago. "We went out a few times," he was quoted as saying. "She was a nice girl, quiet. She didn't really have all that much to say." He didn't remember too much about her, he said.

The bafflement of the police, the lack of clues, the locked door, the closed windows, led me to wonder whether we were formulating the problem properly, whether we were failing to take into account some crucial element. In all discussions of the disappearance, only two possibilities, in all their variations, were ever considered: abduction and escape. The first possibility, although it could never be entirely discounted, had been decisively called into question by the police investigation, which found in the rooms and in the yard no evidence whatever of an intruder. It therefore seemed more reasonable to imagine that Elaine Coleman had left of her own volition. Indeed, it was tempting to believe that by an act of will she had broken from her lonely routine and set forth secretly to start a new life. Alone, friendless, restless, unhappy, and nearing her thirtieth birthday, she had at last overcome some inner constriction and surrendered herself to the lure of adventure. This theory was able to make clever use of the abandoned keys, wallet, coat, and car, which became the very proof of the radical nature of her break from everything familiar in her life. Skeptics pointed out that she wasn't likely to get very far without her credit card, her driver's license, and the twenty-seven dollars and thirty-four cents found in her wallet. But what finally rendered the theory suspect was the conventional and hopelessly romantic nature of the imagined escape, which not only required her to triumph over the quiet habits of a lifetime, but was so much what we might have wished for her that it seemed penetrated by desires not her own. Thus I wondered whether there might not be some other way to account for the disappearance, some bolder way that called for a different, more elusive, more dangerous logic.

The police searched the north woods with dogs, dragged the pond behind the lumberyard. For a while, there were rumors that she had been kidnapped in the parking lot where she worked, but two employees had seen her drive off, Mary Blessington had waved to her in the evening, and Mrs. Zolkowski had heard her closing the refrigerator door, rattling a dish, moving around.

If there was no abduction and no escape, then Elaine Coleman must have climbed the stairs, entered her apartment, locked her door, put the milk in the refrigerator, hung her coat over the back of a chair, and—disappeared. Period. End of discussion. Or to put it another way: the disappearance must have taken place *within the apartment itself.* If one ruled out abduction and escape, then Elaine Coleman ought to have been found somewhere in her rooms—perhaps dead in a closet. But the police investigation had been thorough. She appeared to have vanished from her rooms as completely as she had vanished from my mind, leaving behind only a scattering of clues to suggest she had ever been there.

As the investigation slowly unrav-

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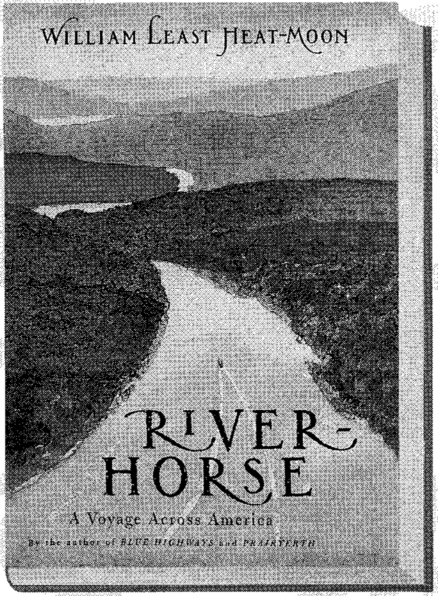
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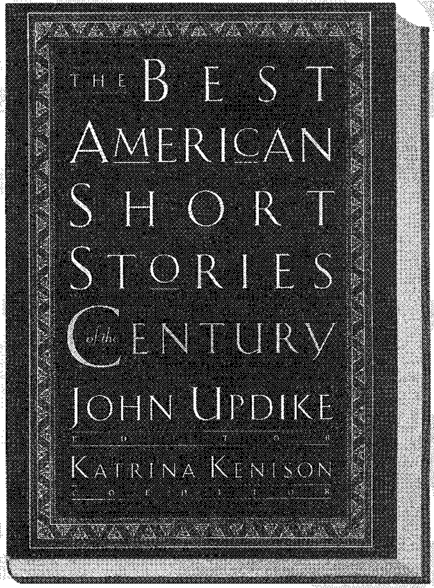
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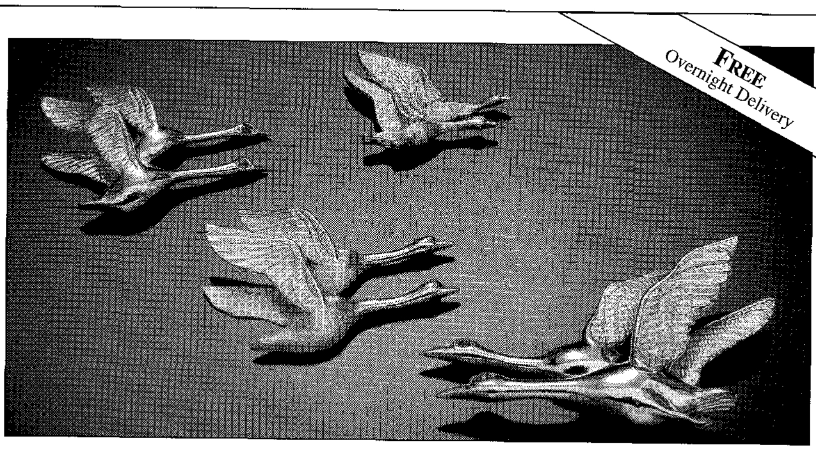

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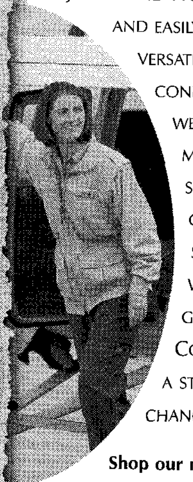

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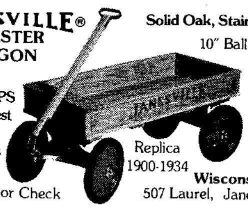

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elled, as the posters faded and at length disappeared, I tried desperately to remember more of Elaine Coleman, as if I owed her at least the courtesy of recollection. What bothered me wasn't so much the disappearance itself, since I had scarcely known her, or even the possible ugliness of that disappearance, but my own failure of memory. Others recalled her still more dimly. It was as if none of us had ever looked at her, or had looked at her while thinking of something more interesting. I felt that we were guilty of some obscure crime. For it seemed to me that we who had seen her now and then out of the corner of our eyes, we who had seen her without seeing her, who without malice had failed to give her our full attention, were already preparing her for the fate that overtook her, were already, in a sense not yet clear to me, pushing her in the direction of disappearance.

It was during this time of failed recollection that I had what can only be called a pseudo-memory of Elaine Coleman, which haunted me precisely to the extent that I did not know how much of her it contained. The time was two or three years before the disappearance. I remembered that I was at a movie theatre with a friend, my friend's wife, and a woman I was seeing then. It was a foreign movie, black-and-white, with subtitles; I remembered my friend's wife laughing wildly at the childish translation of a curse, while the actor on the screen smashed his fist against a door. I recalled a big tub of popcorn that the four us passed back and forth. I recalled the chill of the air-conditioning, which made me long for the heat of the summer night. Slowly the lights came on, the credits continued to roll, and, as the four of us began making our way up the crowded aisle, I noticed a woman in dark clothes rising from a seat near the far aisle. I caught only a glimpse of her before looking irritably away. She reminded me of someone I half knew, maybe the girl from my high school whom I sometimes saw and whose name I had forgotten, and I didn't want to catch her eye, didn't want to be forced to exchange meaningless, awkward words with her, whoever she was. In the bright, jammed lobby, I braced myself for the worthless meeting. But for some reason she never emerged from

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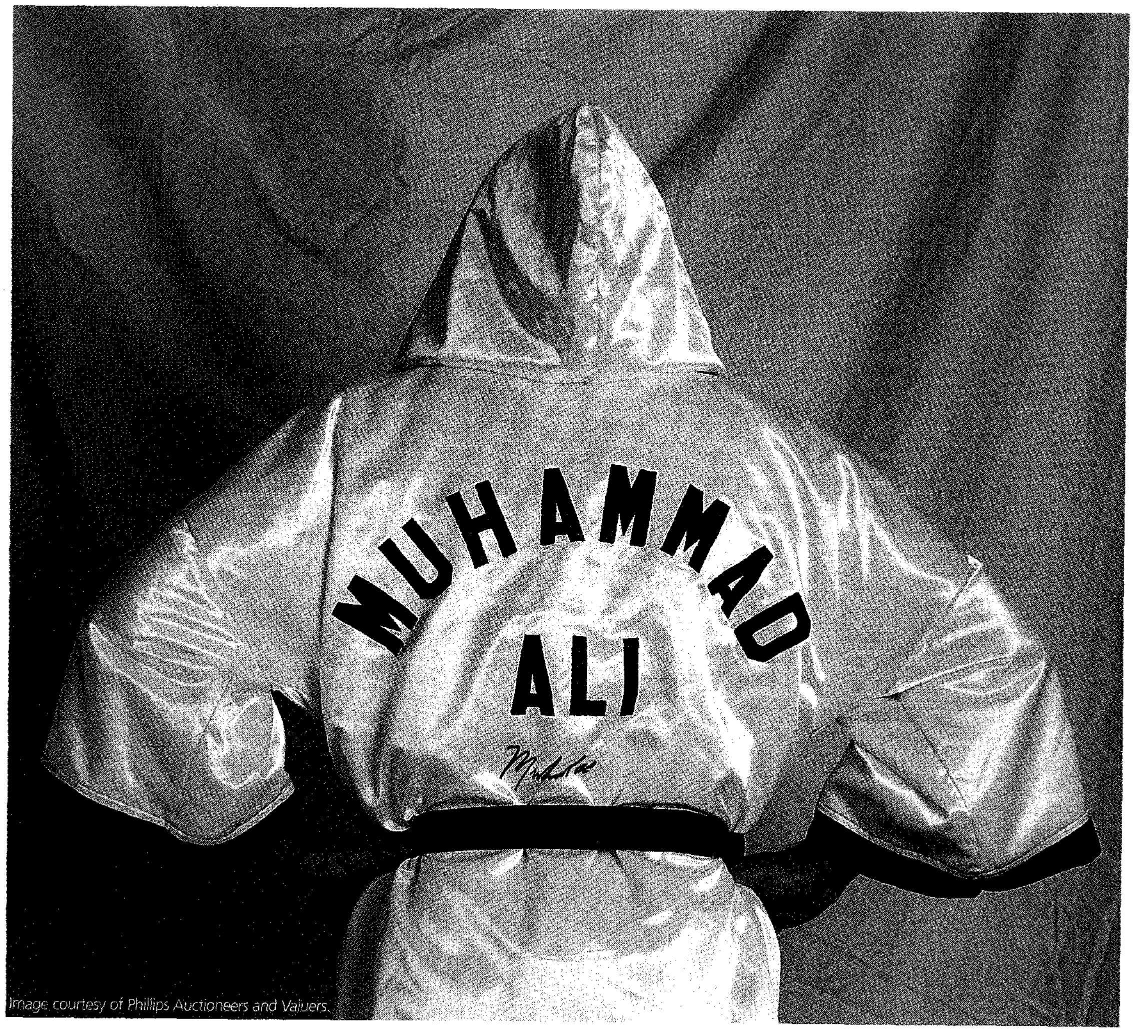

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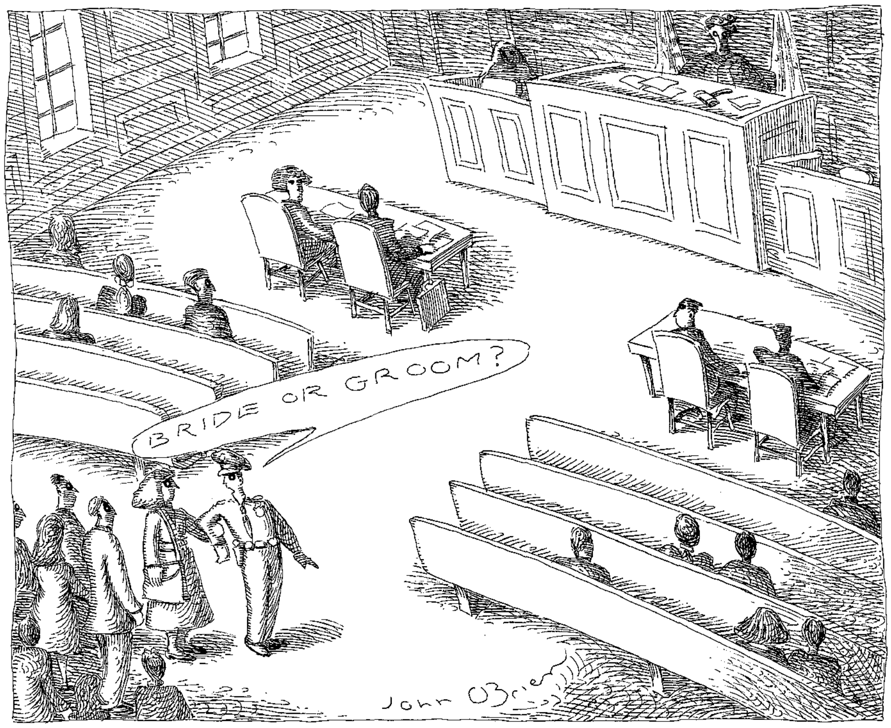
the theatre, and, as I stepped with relief into the heat of the summer night, which already was beginning to seem oppressive, I wondered whether she had hung back on purpose because she had seen me turning irritably away. Then I felt a moment of remorse for my harshness toward the half-seen woman in the theatre, the pseudo-Elaine, for after all I had nothing against her, the girl who had once been in my English class.

Like a detective, like a lover, I returned relentlessly to the few images I had of her: the dim girl at the party, the girl with the basketball who lowered her eyes, the turned-away face in the yearbook picture, the blurred police photo, the vague person, older now, whom I nodded to occasionally in town, the woman in the theatre. I felt as if I had wronged her in some way, as if I had something to atone for. The paltry images seemed to taunt me, as if they held the secret of her disappearance. The hazy girl, the blurred photo . . . Sometimes I felt an inner shaking or trembling, as if I were on the verge of an overwhelming revelation.

One night I dreamed that I was playing basketball with Elaine Coleman. The driveway was also the beach, the ball kept splashing in shallow water, but Elaine Coleman was laughing, her face was radiant though somehow hidden, and, when I woke, I felt that the great failure in my life was never to have evoked that laughter.

As the weather grew colder, I began to notice that people no longer wanted to talk about Elaine Coleman. She had simply disappeared, that was all, and one day she would be found, or forgotten, and that would be that. Life would go on. Sometimes I had the impression that people were angry at her, as if by disappearing she had complicated our lives.

One sunny afternoon in January, I drove to the house on Willow Street. I knew the street, lined now with bare, twisted maples that threw long shadows across the road and onto the fronts of the houses opposite. A brilliant-blue mailbox stood at one corner, beside a telephone pole with a drum-shaped transformer high up under the crossarm. I parked across from the house, but not directly across, and looked at it furtively, as if I were breaking a law. It was a house like many on the block, two-storied and wood-shingled, with side gables and a black roof. The shingles were painted light gray and the shutters black. I saw pale curtains in all the windows and the path of red slates leading to the door in the side of the house. The door had two small windows near the top, and they too were curtained. I saw a row of bare bushes and a piece of the back yard, where a bird feeder hung from a branch. I tried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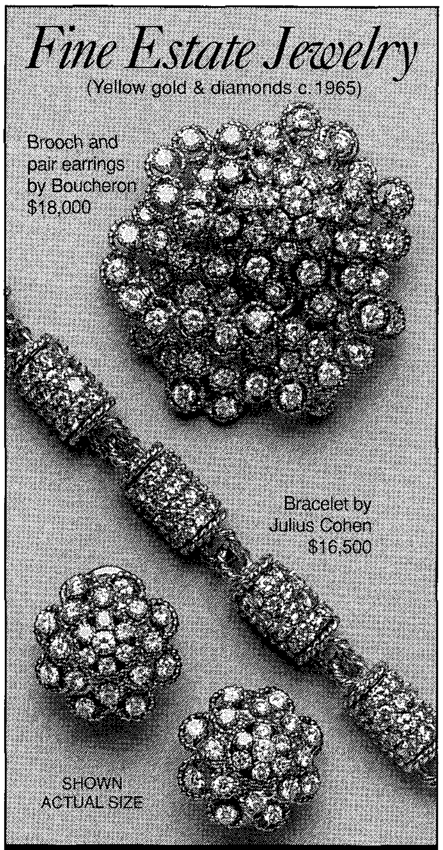
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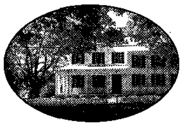
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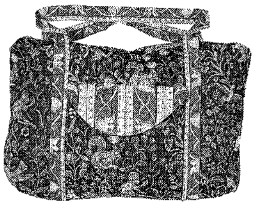
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to imagine her life there, in the quiet house, but I could imagine nothing, nothing at all. It seemed to me that she had never lived there, never gone to my high school—that she was the town's dream, as it lay napping in the cold sun of a January afternoon.

I drove away from that peaceful, mocking street, which seemed to say, "There's nothing wrong here. We're a respectable street. You've had your look, now give it up," but I was farther than ever from letting her go. Helplessly I rummaged through my images, searched for clues, sensed directions that led nowhere. I felt her slipping from me, vanishing, a ghost girl, a blurred photo, a woman without features, a figure in dark clothes rising from her seat and floating away.

I returned to the newspaper reports, which I kept in a folder on my night table. One detail that struck me was that the landlady had not actually seen Elaine Coleman on the final evening before her disappearance. The neighbor, who had waved to her at dusk, had not been able to make her out all that well.

Two nights later, I woke suddenly, startled as if by a dream, though I could recall no dream. A moment later the truth shook me like a blow to the temple.

Elaine Coleman did not disappear suddenly, as the police believed, but gradually, over the course of time. Those years of sitting unnoticed in corners, of not being looked at, must have given her a queasy, unstable sense of herself. Often she must have felt almost invisible. If it is true that we exist by impressing ourselves on other minds, by entering other imaginations, then the quiet, unremarkable girl whom no one noticed must at times have felt herself growing vague, as if she were gradually being erased by the world's inattention. In high school, the process of blurring—begun much earlier—had probably not yet reached a critical stage; her face, with its characteristically lowered and averted eyes, had grown only a little uncertain. By the time she returned from college, the erasure had become more advanced. The woman glimpsed in town without ever being seen, the unimagined person whom no one could recall clearly, was growing dim, fading away, vanishing, like a room at dusk. She was moving irrevocably toward the realm of dream.

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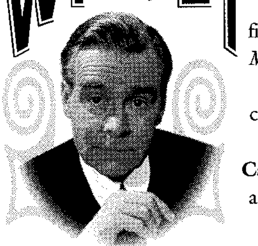

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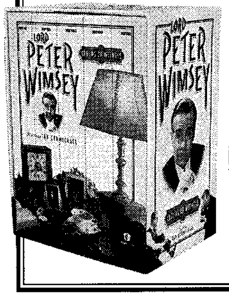

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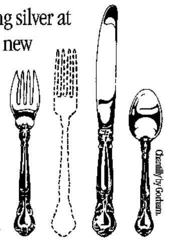

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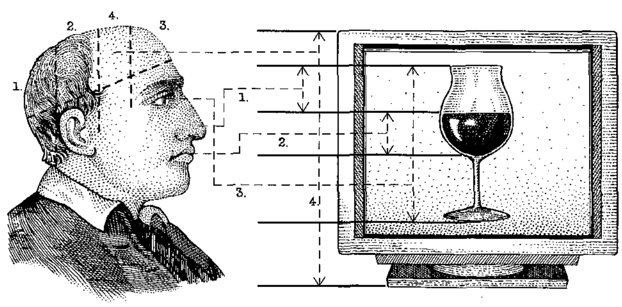

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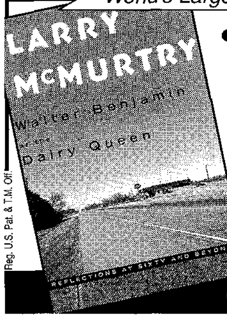
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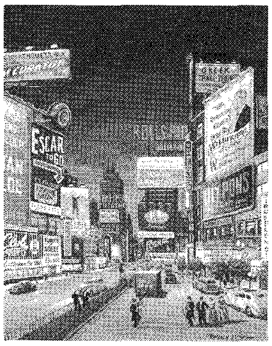

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Blessington waved to her in the dusk without really seeing her, Elaine Coleman was scarcely more than a shadow. She climbed the stairs to her room, locked the door as usual, put the milk in the refrigerator, and hung her coat over the back of a chair. Behind her, the secondhand mirror barely reflected her. She heated the kettle and sat at the kitchen table, reading the paper and drinking a cup of tea. Had she been feeling tired lately, or was there a sense of lightness, of anticipation? In the bedroom she set her cup of tea down on a postcard on her nightstand and changed into her heavy white nightgown with its little blue flowers. Later, when she felt rested, she would make dinner. She pulled out the pillow and lay down with a book. Dusk was deepening into early night. In the darkening room, she could see a shadowy nightstand, the sleeve of a sweater hanging on a chair, the faint shape of her body on the bed. She turned on the lamp and tried to read. Her eyes, heavy-lidded, began to close. I imagine a not unpleasant tiredness, a feeling of finality, a sensation of dispersion. The next day there was nothing but a nightgown and a paperback on a bed.

It may have been a little different: one evening, she may have become aware of what was happening to her; she may, in a profound movement of her being, have embraced her fate and joined forces with the powers of dissolution.

She is not alone. On street corners at dusk, in the corridors of dark movie theatres, behind the windows of cars in parking lots at melancholy shopping centers illuminated by pale-orange lamps, you sometimes see them, the Elaine Colemans of this world. They lower their eyes, they turn away, they vanish into shadowy places. Sometimes I seem to see, through their nearly transparent skin, a light or a building behind them. I try to catch their eyes, to penetrate them with my attention, but it's always too late, already they are fading, fixed as they are in the long habit of not being noticed. And perhaps the police, who suspected foul play, were not in the end mistaken. For we are no longer innocent, we who do not see and do not remember, we incurious ones, we conspirators in disappearance. I too murdered Elaine Coleman. Let this account be entered in the record. ♦

YOU BE THE JUDGE

Choose your favorite books of 1999

Dear Reader,

What were the best books published this year?

For the first time in nearly seventy-five years of publishing, The New Yorker, a magazine that prizes literary excellence, will award prizes for literary excellence. And we're asking our readers to be the judges. Who's better qualified?

The prizes will recognize works of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. A shortlist of five titles in each category has been prepared with the help of some illustrious writers: in fiction, Richard Ford and Jhumpa Lahiri; in nonfiction, Ann Douglas and Jonathan Harr; in poetry, Mark Strand and Susan Wheeler. The final decisions are yours.

You can vote by phone, fax, or E-mail, or by mailing the printed ballot below. But you can vote only once, and you must vote soon. The deadline is January 14, 2000, so that we can announce the winners on February 14th, the seventy-fifth anniversary of this magazine.

There are all kinds of book prizes: the Pulitzer, the National Book Awards, the PEN/Faulkner—and, of course, Oprah. But this is the only prize we know of that lets the reader decide the winner. So please vote.

SELECT ONE FROM EACH CATEGORY

BEST FICTION 1999

☐ **A STAR CALLED HENRY**
by Roddy Doyle (Viking)
A history of Ireland as told by Henry Smart, a philandering, thuggish good-for-nothing who somehow manages always to do good.

☐ **PLAINSONG**
by Kent Haruf (Knopf)
The story of a small town in Colorado—and the steady, uncontrolled sexuality that seems to run through it.

☐ **HUMMINGBIRD HOUSE**
by Patricia Henley (MacMurray & Beck)
An intensely felt account of being an American, trying to do the right thing, during the troubles in Guatemala.

☐ **A GESTURE LIFE**
by Chang-rae Lee (Riverhead)
A Korean pharmacist in New England is haunted by the atrocities inflicted on the "comfort women" when he was serving in the Japanese Army in the Second World War.

☐ **CLOSE RANGE**
by Annie Proulx (Scribner)
Grimm's Fairy Tales as reconceived in the high plains of Wyoming. Cow handlers, bar girls, bad boys, rodeo hands, and two cowboys who discover the love that dare not speak its name.

BEST NONFICTION 1999

☐ **THE ELEGANT UNIVERSE**
by Brian Greene (Norton)
How relativity and quantum mechanics might come together in a grand, unified "theory of everything."

☐ **THE BIG TEST: THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN MERITOCRACY**
by Nicholas Lemann (Farrar, Straus & Giroux)
The Educational Testing Service propelled the rise of a new élite, but with unbargained-for consequences.

☐ **OUT OF PLACE: A MEMOIR**
by Edward W. Said (Knopf)
An eminent literary scholar tells of growing up in the Middle East and the United States—a Christian among Muslims, an Arab among Americans.

☐ **THE IMMACULATE INVASION**
by Bob Shacochis (Viking)
Eighteen months with Special Forces commandos in Haiti, during Operation Uphold Democracy.

☐ **MORGAN: AMERICAN FINANCIER**
by Jean Strouse (Random House)
A biography finds much to admire in the bogeyman of capitalism.

BEST POETRY COLLECTION 1999

☐ **OF NO COUNTRY I KNOW: NEW AND SELECTED POEMS AND TRANSLATIONS**
by David Ferry (Chicago)
Four decades of translations, from Gilgamesh to Rilke, and Ferry's own classically lucid poetry.

☐ **VITA NOVA**
by Louise Glück (Ecco)
A book-length sequence on death, rebirth, and the end of love, weaving together myth and autobiography.

☐ **THE CONSTRUCTOR**
by John Koethe (HarperFlamingo/HarperCollins)
A philosopher's meditation—evocative of Ashbery and Stevens—on the value of consciousness.

☐ **POEMS**
by J.H. Prynne (Bloodaxe/Dufour Editions)
Thirty years of poetry by a Cambridge don linking the High Modernists with the Romantic tradition.

☐ **THE PILOT STAR ELEGIES**
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SWEEPSTAKES RULES
1. NO PURCHASE NECESSARY
2. How to enter: All entries must be either on the official entry form or on a facsimile of a blank entry form, or by phone, fax or Web site as otherwise provided in this paragraph. Complete the questionnaire and print your name, your complete address, and your telephone number. Then mail the enclosed postage-paid reply card (or a facsimile in an envelope) to: The New Yorker Poll, P.O. Box 981024, El Paso, TX 79998. Entries must be received by January 14, 2000. The New Yorker is not responsible for lost, late, postage-due, or misdirected mail. You may also enter by dialing 800-246-1400 or via The New Yorker's Web site at www.newyorker.com. Only one entry per person permitted. 3. The grand-prize winner will be chosen in a random drawing of all completed questionnaires on or about February 11, 2000, by The Willard & Shullman Group Inc., and will be notified by mail or phone within two weeks of the drawing. All decisions by the judges are final. The grand prize is not transferable. 4. The trip will include hotel accommodations (double occupancy) for the winner and a guest for two nights in London and three days and three nights at Llangoed Hall in Wales, round-trip coach air transportation on British Airways from the major commercial airport nearest the winner's home in the U.S., airport transfers, ground transportation, meals (up to a specified limit), and tickets to the Hay Festival events. Additional transportation and other expenses are not included. Scheduling is subject to availability and blackout dates; certain restrictions may apply. Travel must be completed during the Hay Festival program in 2000. Total retail value of the grand prize is approximately $5,000, depending on point of origin. 5. Income and other taxes, if any, are the sole responsibility of the winner. No substitutions for the prizes will be allowed, except by The New Yorker in case of unavailability, in which case a prize of equal or greater value will be substituted. 6. All entries become the property of The New Yorker and will not be acknowledged or returned. 7. Sweepstakes is open to residents of the forty-eight contiguous United States who are 18 years or older as of February 11, 2000, except employees of the Condé Nast Publications, and the families of the preceding. Subject to all federal, state, and local laws and regulations. Void outside the 48 contiguous states and where prohibited. Odds of winning depend on the number of entries received. 8. Acceptance of prize constitutes consent to use the winner's name and likeness for editorial, advertising, and publicity purposes. The winner will be required to sign an Affidavit of Eligibility, and winner and guest will be required to sign a Liability/Publicity release which must be returned within ten days from date of notification or an alternate winner may be chosen. 9. Participants agree to be bound by the above rules and regulations. 10. For the name of the winner, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to The New Yorker Book Awards Sweepstakes Winner, 4 Times Square, 21st Floor, New York, NY 10036. Attention: Editorial Promotion, after March 1, 2000.

THE CRITICS

THE ART WORLD

FANFARES FOR THE COMMON MAN

Norman Rockwell, reconsidered.

BY PETER SCHJELDAHL

I GREW up in small towns in the nineteen-forties and fifties, and I remember the power of *Saturday Evening Post* covers by Norman Rockwell. Extracted from the mailbox, they went off in one's hands like charm bombs. I would look and look, absorbing a surfeit of meaning that was sweet beyond measure. The sweetness lingers. The meaning, I am interested to note, didn't take. None of the hundreds of Rockwell images that appear in "Norman Rockwell: Pictures for the American People," a retrospective at the High Museum of Art, in Atlanta, rings a childhood bell with me. I conclude that Rockwell's visual fictions, while distinct features of my early experience, simply never linked up with what really mattered to me. The only thing that is surely Rockwellian about my recollections of life in Christine, North Dakota, and Farmington, Minnesota—where, if you must know, I fished in creeks, played baseball, and all that—is Norman Rockwell.

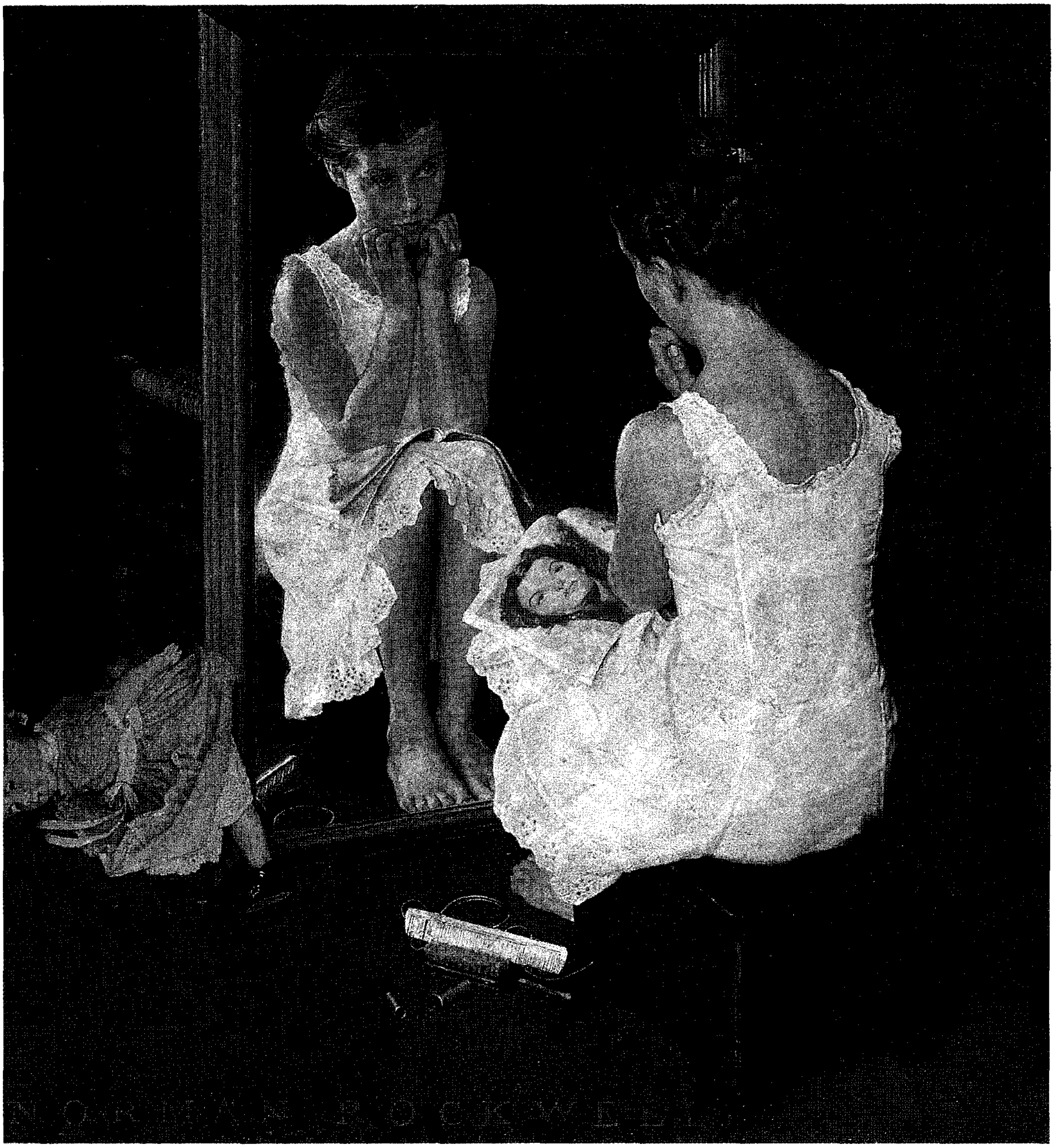
There you have the basic anatomy of my personal ambivalence on the occasion of a Rockwell revival that shows signs of getting completely out of control. After closing in Atlanta, on January 30th, the retrospective will travel to Chicago, Washington, D.C., San Diego, Phoenix, and Stockbridge, Massachusetts (home of the Norman Rockwell Museum), before opening at the Guggenheim in New York, in November, 2001. Rockwell at the Guggenheim? Rockwell in sophisticated glory? Professionally, I am happy to endorse the notion, which seems ever less absurd as time goes on. Rockwell is some kind of great artist. To say what kind is difficult, because our art culture, which keeps score on these matters, has long tended to the view that Rockwell isn't an artist at all. This is no mere adjustment of a reputation but a deep shift in how we identify and value visual art.

Rockwell's greatness is of a type that hides in plain sight. He is far more subtle an artist than may have been suspected by his tens of millions of fans, whose admiration for him has scarcely abated since his death, in 1978. (Nobody doesn't know Rockwell. According to a teacher friend of mine, this goes for today's art students who are vague about Henri Matisse.) Rockwell is more of an artist than he himself ever ventured to claim, such was his ache for simple acceptance. He embraced the term "illustrator," despite the fact that nearly all his pictures are sui generis—made up from scratch. Steeped in the history and rhetoric of Western painting, he was a visual storyteller of genius. More than that, he was a story-maker, a bard. He didn't illustrate Middle America. He invented Middle America.

BORN in 1894, Rockwell was a Manhattan kid, the son of an office worker. He loved it when his father read Dickens aloud at the dining-room table. "I would . . . draw pictures of the different characters," Rockwell wrote in "My Adventures as an Illustrator," his 1960 autobiography. "Mr. Pickwick, Oliver Twist, Uriah Heep. They were pretty crude pictures, but I was very deeply impressed and moved by Dickens. . . . The variety, sadness, horror, happiness, treachery, the twists and turns of life; the sharp impressions of dirt, food, inns, horses, streets; and people . . . shocked and delighted me. So that, I thought, is what the world is really like." This last sentence stuns a bit. It also illuminates. What the world would always be "really like" for Rockwell was, in a word, entertaining. He came equipped in his soul to join the American entertainment industry, which, amid the tumultuous dislocations of the early twentieth century, took on the role of providing a hopelessly inchoate, anxious democracy with sturdy and supple myths of nationhood.

By the age of twenty-two, after art school and a job as art editor of the Boy Scout magazine *Boys' Life*, Rockwell was doing *Saturday Evening Post* covers under the brilliantly canny editor George Horace Lorimer. Rockwell lived in New Rochelle, from 1915 to 1939, then in Arlington, Vermont, and, finally, from 1953 on, in Stockbridge. He was married three times—always to a schoolteacher. He worked compulsively, seven days a week, including holidays. In his commercial trench, he pined intermittently for the heights of fine art. In 1931-32, he moved with his family to Paris, seeking invigoration. It was a wash, and he soon returned home. But he never ceased to revere Picasso—"the greatest," he said. At heart, he was as liberal in his aesthetics as he was in his politics. (He was a Roosevelt and, later, a Kennedy man; and he became a timely propagandist for the civil-rights movement.) His wonderful "The Connoisseur," of 1962, in which an old-fashioned gent confronts a credibly caricatured Jackson Pollock painting, expresses Rockwell's perplexed admiration for an avant-garde that he seemed never to resent for scorning him.

I CAN think of good reasons to despair of Rockwell's art, but, first, certain bad reasons must be knocked down. Cosmopolitan artists and intellectuals of the nineteen-thirties—the seedtime of the postwar art world—feared and despised the juggernaut of American mass culture, which they too readily associated with the contemporaneous machinations of totalitarian



"Girl at Mirror" (1954). Rockwell, a visual story-maker, painted scenes of precarious comfort.

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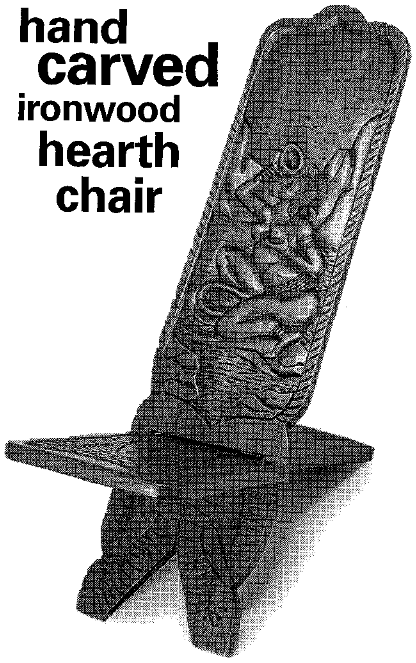
culture. Populism equalled Fascism or Sovietism, and that was that. But American populism has always differed in political character from its European counterparts. It celebrates the individual, steering closer to condoned anarchy than to forced solidarity. The critic Dave Hickey, in an essay for the show's catalogue, terms Rockwell's feat "democratic history painting"—that is, he invests "the everyday activities of ordinary people with a sense of historical consequence." Rockwell is sentimental, but his ruling sentiments are far from trivial. Most of them play variations on the theme of tolerance.

In nearly every Rockwell, someone is discovered to be at odds with something. Take "Saying Grace," a November, 1951, *Post* cover that pictures a countrified old woman and little boy praying in a train-station restaurant under the eyes of working-class hard cases. The watchers, not the watched, star in the mild drama. Their domain has been invaded. They are variously bemused, but it does not occur to them to react overtly. Their restraint ennobles them. The travellers' piety is safe in a profane joint, secured by the democratic imperative to make space for difference. It would be unlike Rockwell, in any case, to go gooey over re-



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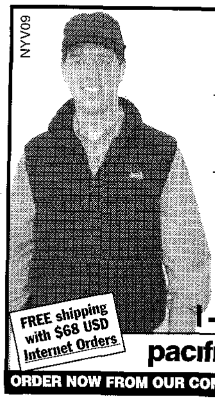

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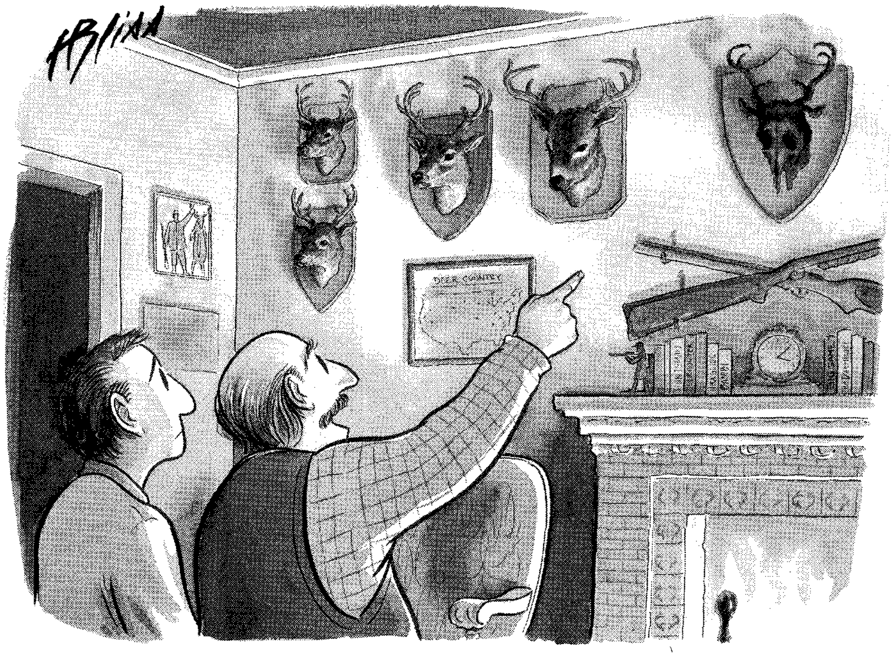

"And that one I tagged with a flamethrower from ten yards."

• •

ligiosity (except when he was doing commissioned illustrations of F.D.R.'s "Four Freedoms," and the theme of "Worship" forced him to it). He was thoroughly secular. If he suggests any classic American type himself, it is the waggishly atheist country doctor or newspaper editor, a Mark Twain-like observer of human folly who is continually saved from cynicism by a tender heart. In picture after picture, Rockwell enacts a skeptic's escape from the sin of contempt.

Rockwell painted three hundred and twenty-two *Post* covers, all of which are arrayed at the High in a cavernous room at the midpoint of a show that includes dozens of the original paintings, along with examples of his work for other employers, including Jell-O and Ford. He improved with time. My walking survey of the massed covers—many of them bearing yellowed mailing labels addressed to ancient subscribers—was brisk at first, undetained by jokey conceits in a monotonous graphic layout that incorporated the magazine's logo. My pace slowed as I reached the late nineteen-thirties, when Rockwell was freed from that format, and his work began to exude a certain gravitas in key with a darkening era. Coming at last to a long stop, I found myself gazing at "The Homecoming" (1945), one of the artist's rare urban images: A populous explosion of joy on a tenement porch greets a young returning soldier. Mother spreads her arms. Little brother and dog set out for the veteran at a dead run. His sweetheart hangs back shyly. Neighbor kids pop out of windows and shinny down a tree. A workman turns from roof repairs that, from the look of things, are long overdue.

Small and alone, the soldier stands in the building's bleak yard with his back to us. As is often the case with Rockwell, the putative protagonist of the story is the object of the picture's action. We enter the scene by way of the young man's feelings, which may be laced with the incommunicable scars of war. In a window appears the embroidered blue star indicating that a household had a man in the service. (I recognized it because I possess one that hung in vigil for my father, whose own 1945 homecoming is among my earliest memories.) The Second World War did a great deal to—and for—America and thus, by organic extension, to and for Rockwell. It took some of the silliness out of his optimism. After the war, his images of community—the social form of love—took on poignance as scenes of precarious comfort. But his congenital, at times daunt-

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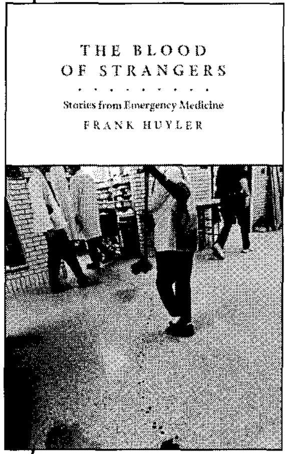
ing, optimism never really faltered.

Like the classic rural freethinker, Rockwell is a nineteenth-century positivist in his bones, convinced that the world is knowable—and here we come to what I dislike about him. The absolute absence of mystery in his art makes me sick. It explains why, as a boy, I never felt a spark of connection between my small-town existence and small-town life according to Rockwell, despite superficial parallels. He got everything right—except the confusion that flowed in and through every jot of my own experience. When he rendered childish chagrin, it was with a cozy chuckle, which I find hard to endure even now. In Atlanta, my ambivalence zoomed in on one of his loveliest images: a young girl in an old-fashioned slip frankly appraising her looks in an antique mirror. Why, oh why, must she have a goddam movie magazine open on her lap? O.K., I know. Rockwell's principled sense of narrative cogency demanded that every visible action have a visible cause. The effect is suffocating.

ROCKWELL painted beautifully, by the way. At the High, his surprisingly large, dense, and sumptuous canvases seem excessive to the requirements of designs for magazine covers. He mastered a sort of hurry-up chiaroscuro, starting with a transfer drawing that was derived from many preliminary sketches, photographs, and oil studies, and then working out tones in a warm grayish-purple, Mars violet. Then he would apply varnish, so as not to disturb the painting's underlayer while he revised the scumbled lights and shadows to construct images that are at once photographically vivid in their details and richly painterly over all. Unlike arid paintings by the somewhat more respectable crowd-pleaser Andrew Wyeth, Rockwell's work actually looks better in its original state than it does in glossy reproduction. The artistic gifts that he put in service to feel-good journalism were of no mean order. The implied compliment to popular taste—as if Americans deserved no less than an Escoffier to prepare their hamburgers—fully justifies people's love of him.

The word "nostalgia" pops up often in references to Rockwell, usually in

"A modest jewel, a compact, faceted gem that shines with intelligence."—*Boston Globe*



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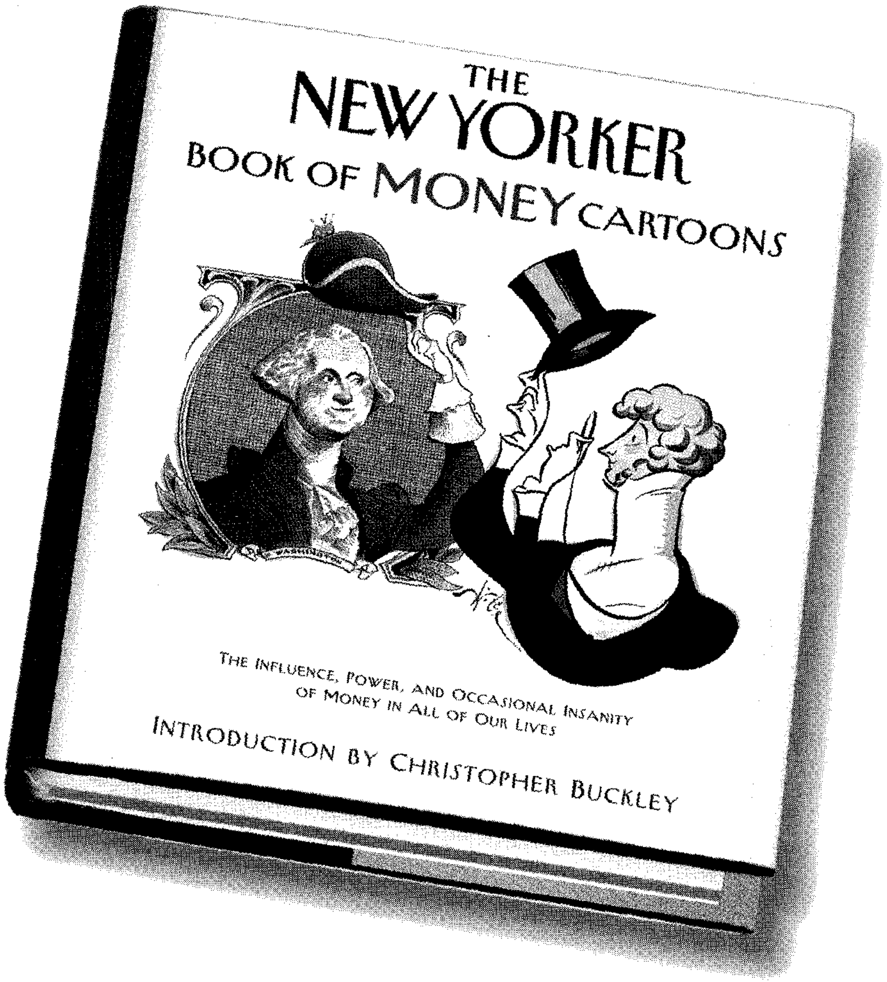
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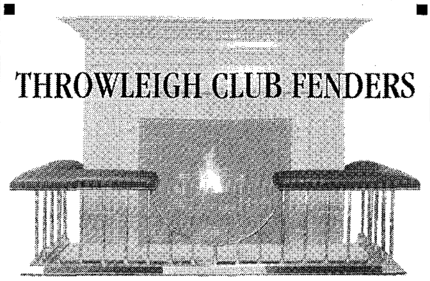

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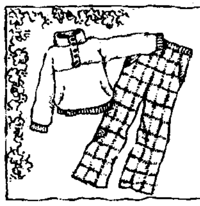

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deprecation. "Nostalgia for an America that never was," goes a typical trope. The characterization is both misleading and dated. It springs from the political ruptures and technocratic hubris of the nineteeen-sixties, when Rockwell himself was persuaded to forsake themes of national amity in favor of partisan pathos and—as in his idealizations of the NASA space program—the managerial sublime. If anyone caught the falling Rockwellian torch back then, it was Andy Warhol, whose best works raise common images to the pitch of religious icons, uniting public and private joys. At issue is a belief that American society amounts to something like a civilization. Today's Rockwell revival signals a weariness with the rancorous horror that democracy becomes for want of that spirit. Honoring such grace in the past, we ready ourselves to receive its like again. ♦

BOOKS

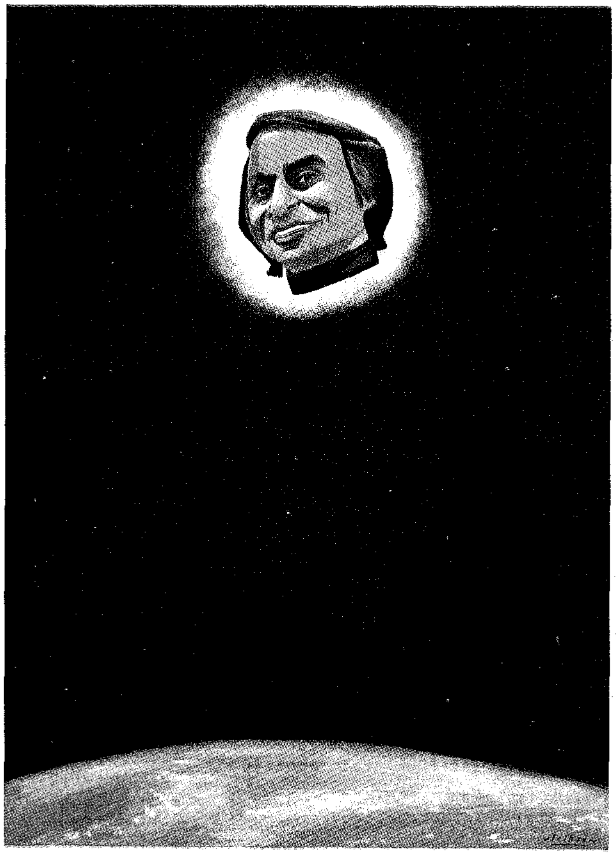
BILLIONS AND BILLIONS

How Carl Sagan explored the cosmos.

BY THOMAS MALLON

DECADES ago, NASA often launched its space probes in pairs, directing each toward the same planet, in case one of them should fail. Mariner 2, for instance, made it all the way to Venus, while Mariner 1 ended up in the Atlantic. Usually, though, both craft reached their destination and shared in the labor of exploration once they arrived. Now, three years after the death of Carl Sagan, a pair of large new biographies—William Poundstone's "Carl Sagan: A Life in the Cosmos" (Holt; $30) and Keay Davidson's "Carl Sagan: A Life" (Wiley; $30)—perform flybys of the stimulating and occasionally unpleasant terrain that constituted the astronomer's life. Each book contains its share of loose bolts and misalignments: the account by Davidson, who is the chief science writer for the San Francisco *Examiner*, can be irritatingly chummy and is sometimes crass; Poundstone, who is the author of "The Recursive Universe" and other books, presents a more sober, but perhaps overorganized narrative. Together, though, the two volumes offer a rounded portrait of a man who, in Davidson's formulation, was not only "a head-in-the-clouds visionary" but also "a cunning careerist."

Sagan was born in the Bensonhurst section of Brooklyn, in 1934, and arrived at his vocation early. Before he was out of his teens, he was already a compulsive popularizer, introducing others to the arcana and vastness of the heavens as if he owned the place: "Sit down and loosen your collar button," he wrote inside a high-school notebook. "The number in very round figures is somewhat more than one hundred-seventy octillion (170,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000) stars. . . . Take every grain of sand on every beach on the earth. Multiply it by ten. That number is now one-one hundredth the number of stars in the universe. The reader now, perhaps, has some idea as to the immensity of the universe." In the nineteen-fifties, when he was in his twenties and doing doctoral research at the Yerkes Observatory in rural Wisconsin, he delivered Saturday lectures to the local public; ten years after that, he was advising Stanley Kubrick to allude to, but not actually depict, the aliens in his film "2001." A decade later, he began filming "Cosmos," the popular public-television series, which aired in the early eighties. For an hour each week, Sagan's unforgettable voice droned on, virtually uninterrupted, in a kind of glottal clarinet solo, while closeups of his face ("a pleasing amalgam of Rudolph Nureyev and George Plimpton," according to one reviewer) were offered up as objects of study seemingly on a par with Jupiter and the Oort cloud. But it was the "Tonight Show" that made Sagan a celebrity. He appeared on the program dozens of times, and Johnny Carson's "billions and billions" routine, which further expanded his fame, was also emblematic of the ambivalence he came to feel toward it. Sagan claimed never to have uttered the phrase (he checked all thirteen episodes of "Cosmos" to make sure), but nevertheless ended up using it for the title of his last essay collection, published shortly after his death.



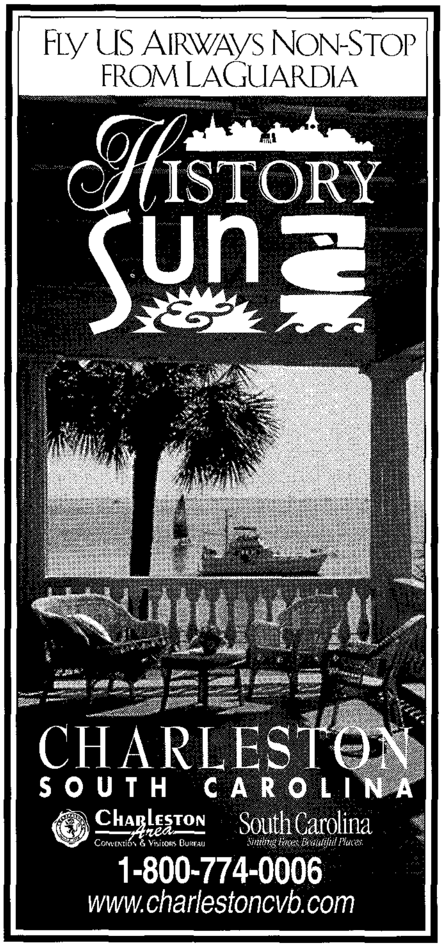
For thirty-five years, Sagan was crucial to the scientific search for extraterrestrial intelligence.

MARK ULRIKSEN

In many respects, Sagan was the heir to Simon Newcomb, the country's most famous nineteenth-century planetary astronomer, whose renown lured him into making pronouncements on religion, economics, and the paranormal, raising the hackles of his colleagues. Like Sagan, he was something of a showboat as well; his "Astronomy for Everybody" was the "Cosmos" of its day. And when Newcomb died, in 1909, President Taft attended his funeral; nine decades later, Al Gore delivered a eulogy at Sagan's memorial service in New York City.

In the case of Sagan, the complaints (and jealousy) of colleagues rose in proportion to his increasing fame and influence. The seriousness that his fellow-scientists were often unwilling to concede him must therefore be looked at in the light of his impact on the whole direction of space science in the nineteen-seventies and eighties. For it was thanks largely to him that NASA was able to maintain a measure of public interest and, probably, funding in the post-Apollo era, which, though it seemed anticlimactic at the time, ushered in a golden age of unmanned travel to other planets. "It was Sagan more than anyone," Poundstone writes, "who framed the robotic exploration of the solar system as a quest for life."

GROWING up, Sagan saw Brooklyn as a place where the stars "just didn't seem to belong," and where a local librarian responded to his request for a book on the subject by handing him a volume "filled with pictures of people like Jean Harlow and Clark Gable." He immersed himself in the science fiction of Edgar Rice Burroughs and the pseudo-science of the astronomer Percival Lowell, and sought to project himself onto the Red Planet through concentrated wishing. As he was entering high school, the family moved to Rahway, New Jersey. Gentle Samuel Sagan wanted his son Carl to take over his coat business; his termagant wife, Rachel, hoped for a concert pianist but saw greatness in almost anything the boy did. (When he blew up a test tube in front of a couple of girls, she is said to have declared, "These things happen when scientists do experiments.") Later, at the University of Chicago, where he received both his undergraduate and graduate degrees, Robert Maynard Hutchins's Great Books program supplied him with a classical frame of ref-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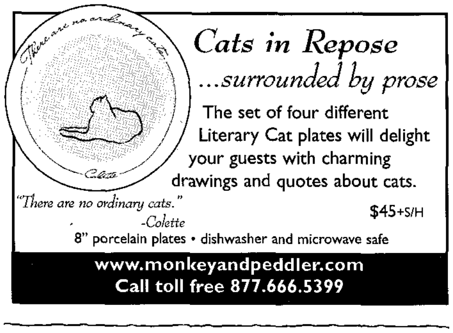
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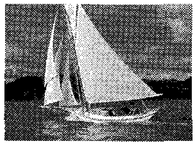

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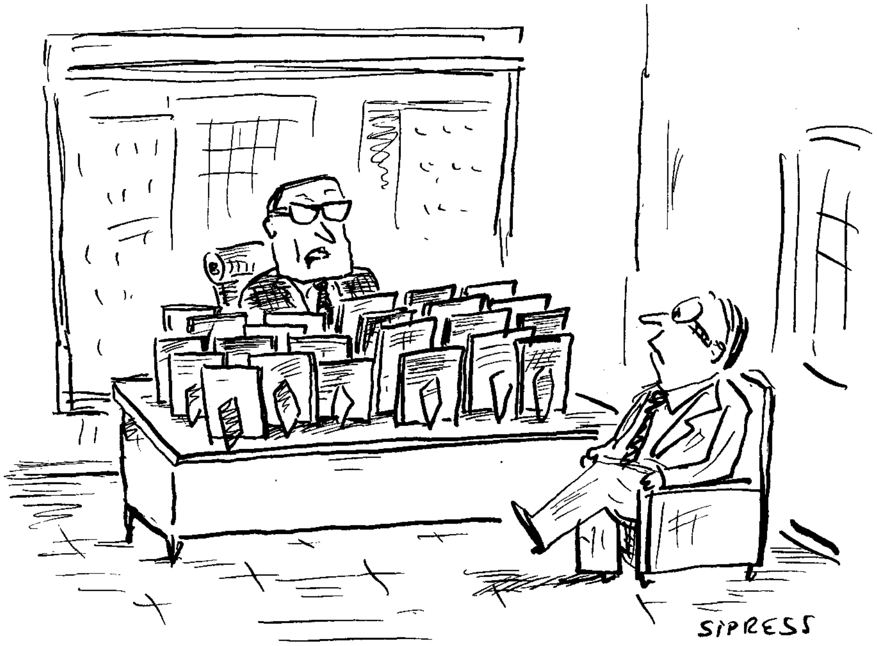
erence that he put to sometimes flashy and sometimes elegant use in his adult writings. The catholicity of the Hutchins curriculum seems also to have influenced his doctoral dissertation, which included a section on the possibility of life on the moon and on Venus. His "greenhouse model" for Venus, in which he argued that the planet's water vapor and carbon dioxide retained and magnified the sun's heat, brought him a widespread attention among planetary astronomers which was furthered when he suggested, in 1961, that Venus could be made habitable for humans by seeding its noxious clouds with earthly microörganisms that would cool and oxygenate it. (This notion of "terraforming" was probably derived from nineteen-thirties and forties sci-fi, Davidson explains.)

From this early point in his career, Sagan developed a reputation for thinking big and fast, and for using order-of-magnitude calculations, which Davidson explains as "back-of-the-envelope" figuring—a "rough 'guesstimating' method [that] allows for fast checks on ideas and for fairly free-wheeling experimentation to see what numbers might work." Sagan defended the method, declaring that it "cuts through nonsense like a knife through butter," but others had their doubts. By 1962, Davidson writes, Sagan "was developing a dangerous reputation for wacky thinking." He was also increasingly seen as someone who was quick to grab credit for the results of collaborative efforts, although this perception may have been exacerbated by the press: it was easier to get airtime by ascribing discoveries to the handsome, eager Sagan than to a whole committee of his dry-as-moondust colleagues. A negative evaluation from one of his mentors helped doom any chance he might have had for tenure at Harvard, where he spent much of the sixties as an assistant professor. Years passed before Sagan learned that this blackball had been tossed by Harold Urey, whose famous 1952 experiment with Stanley Miller succeeded in producing amino acids by bombarding what Urey thought were Earth's original atmospheric elements—methane, ammonia, hydrogen, and water vapor—with electrical charges. Both biographers agree that the implication of the two scientists' findings—that life might readily form itself elsewhere in the universe—had greatly excited Sagan, steering him toward the "exobiology" that became the focus of his life's work.

Such was Sagan's own capacity to convey excitement—he could make imaginings sound like hypotheses and hypotheses feel like truth—that one forgets, without Davidson and Poundstone to make it plain, how many dry celestial holes he actually drilled. After urging NASA to put cameras on its inter-



"This may surprise you, Worthington, but I'm a man who believes that nothing in life is as important as family."

planetary spacecraft (they were once considered a waste of weight that could be allotted to other instruments), Sagan was called upon to explain the inscrutable photographs of Mars taken by Mariner 4 in 1965. When the *Times*, referring to the chasteningly bleak pictures, entitled an editorial "The Dead Planet," Sagan countered by claiming that "a photographic survey at Mariner's resolution would have been unlikely to find a single unambiguous sign of life on Earth."

Harder to ignore were the spectacularly austere pictures that came from the Viking landers in 1976. Close up, the Martian surface looked like an American desert under a pink sky, and betrayed no sign of what Sagan liked to call "macrobes," let alone the polar-bear-size creatures he had glibly imagined before the spacecraft's arrival. Poundstone, who does the better job of the two biographers when it comes to Viking's experimental program, explains that the "puzzling and equivocal biology results" accompanied an "utter failure to detect organic chemistry."

But the data did not deter Sagan from speculating, in a "Cosmos" episode a few years later, as to the possible presence of "balloon animals" on gaseous Jupiter, or from producing the gold-coated copper records of earthly sounds and images which were included on two Voyager spacecraft launched by NASA in 1977 for a grand tour of the outer planets and beyond. It was the most cheerful enterprise of his career; the two craft are still travelling, now well past the solar system, with recordings of "Johnny B. Goode" on board.

EXTRATERRESTRIAL intelligence has always been the exobiological grail, and for thirty-five years Sagan was crucial to the serious scientific search for it. He co-wrote a book on the subject with the Soviet scientist I. S. Shklovskii and, in 1961, he attended the first conference of Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (SETI) pioneers. The conference was convened by Frank Drake, the author of the Drake equation, whose variables still govern the order-of-magnitude calculations behind attempts to locate a radio signal emanating from some distant globe:

> The number (*N*) of detectable civilizations in space equals the rate (*R*) of star for-

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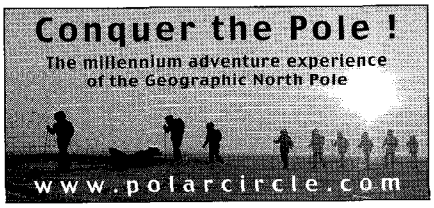

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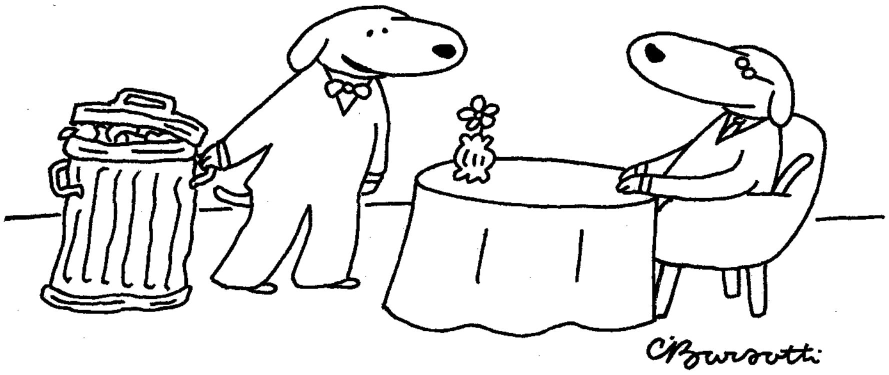

"The special, sir. Shall I spread it out or will you knock it over yourself?"

• •

mation, times the fraction (f_p) of stars that form planets, times the number (n_e) of planets hospitable to life, times the fraction (f_l) of those planets where life actually emerges, times the fraction (f_i) of those planets where life evolves into intelligent beings, times the fraction (f_c) of planets with intelligent creatures capable of interstellar communication, times the length of time (L) that such a civilization remains detectable.

Davidson points out that Sagan's first wife, the eminent biologist Lynn Margulis, makes one of the principal arguments against the likelihood of our ever receiving an otherworldly transmission: " 'Of the tens of millions of species on Earth,' she says, 'almost none of them communicate with each other . . . and we have 100 percent of our chemistry in common.' So how likely are we to communicate with aliens who don't share our biochemistry?" But Sagan recognized that the cultural implications of such a discovery would be enormous, and his smooth lobbying for the program managed to convert even Senator William Proxmire, who had attacked SETI's federal funding with one of his "Golden Fleece" awards in 1978. Sagan maintained his own credibility in the E.T. realm by consistently debunking reports of U.F.O. sightings and alien abductions. Still, neither of his biographers has failed to note a youthful letter he wrote to Secretary of State Dean Acheson, in which he asked what federal preparations might be under way to deal with a potential interstellar enemy.

Anyone spending time with SETI scientists is likely to be struck by the egolessness of their search. It's a venture that is hard to reconcile with the often overbearing Sagan. The quest, however, was central not only to his science but to his politics. Eventually, he came to see L—the length of time that a communicating civilization remains detectable—as the variable in the Drake equation with the greatest earthly implications, since L might well mean not the number of years a civilization kept using radio signals but, instead, how long it took to blow itself up.

Both Poundstone and Davidson connect Sagan's SETI work to his tireless promulgation in the nineteen-eighties of the theory of "nuclear winter," which postulates that even a limited atomic war would cap the Earth with smoke, cooling it to a point where agriculture and, finally, all life would become unsustainable. Sagan was alarmed by this apocalyptic hypothesis, which was developed in part by one of his protégés, James Pollack, at NASA's Ames Research Center, and was published in a paper that became known as TTAPS. (The funereal acronym derived from the last-name initial of each of its authors; Sagan's own brought up the rear.)

Those who were persuaded by the findings recognized in them clear political imperatives: they voiced support for a nuclear freeze and opposition to President Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative proposal. The defense establishment, on the other hand, questioned the scientific basis of the study and accused TTAPS proponents of upsetting a balance of nuclear terror that had thus far kept the peace. Sagan entered the split-screen fray with great gusto and perhaps even more than his usual self-delight: William F. Buckley, Jr., described the astronomer's behavior during a congressional appearance as being "so arrogant he might have been confused with, well, me."

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Poundstone, though clearly sympathetic to Sagan's position, is the more evenhanded guide to this later phase of the scientist's career. Davidson, by contrast, perceives a battleground where "virulent right-wingers" were "scheming to revive the Cold War"—and perhaps even to win it. "The memoirs of Reagan Administration officials generally say little or nothing about 'nuclear winter,' " he writes, "but anecdotal reports suggest that the Soviets took the hypothesis more seriously." Not so seriously, one suspects, as they took deployment of the Pershing II in Western Europe.

Sagan was probably the best advocate that nuclear-winter theorists could have wished for, but he could no more have envisioned the actual American-Soviet endgame than he could have realized the irony of his dispatching Voyager's "greetings on behalf of the people of our planet" in the voice of Kurt Waldheim.

In relation to wives, children, and friends, Sagan seems to have sat, charismatic and impossible, at the center of his own pre-Copernican universe. Lynn Margulis remembers him as being "terrible on a personal basis"—too inattentive and overextended to function as a good husband and father, a man who was able to relax only "if he had ten thousand people" admiring him. (His marriage to her ended in divorce, as did his second marriage, to the artist Linda Salzman.) The success of "Cosmos," and the fame that grew out of the "Tonight Show," only fed Sagan's arrogance. He began throwing tantrums in public; restaurants seemed to bring out the worst in him. At Cornell, where he was for years the university's most famous faculty member, he was so inaccessible to the ordinary student that one university publication offered a free subscription and a six-pack of beer to the first undergraduate providing proof of actually having made "physical contact with Dr. Sagan."

At the same time, almost all of Sagan's friends concede that he was softened by his third wife and sometime collaborator, the writer Ann Druyan, and that he endured with exceptional grace the terrible bone-marrow transplants that preceded his early death, from complications of myelodysplasia. He seems to have derived genuine

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BRIEFLY NOTED

Colony Girl, by Thomas Rayfiel (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $23). Eve, the wisecracking narrator of this coming-of-age novel, is in the throes of adolescence: her sexual longings are abrupt and unpredictable, alcohol suddenly looms as a constant temptation, and, like most teen-agers, she's convinced that she's a freak. But Eve is also a member of the Colony—a hardscrabble Christian sect founded amid the cornfields of Iowa by a charismatic named Gordon. She's not allowed to drive or use the telephone ("No telephones in the Bible"), her best friend is about to be married off to an older Colonist, and Gordon seems more interested in watching his wide-screen TV all night than in watching over his increasingly restless flock. Can any of them, Eve wonders, be saved? Rayfiel manages to make his heroine's consummately weird existence both completely believable and perpetually startling, because even Eve is never sure what she's going to do next. She serves as a reminder that teen-age rebellion can turn a quiet life in the American heartland into a thrilling ride—especially if you're not supposed to set foot in a car in the first place.

The Walking Tour, by Kathryn Davis (Houghton Mifflin; $23). When Susan Rose is thirteen, her parents go to Wales on holiday, and her mother, a famous painter, vanishes into a storm. The ensuing court trial for negligence is woven into the narrative decades later as Susan, living in the crumbling family manse and haunted by a sinewy vandal named Monkey, obsessively sifts through the past for clues. Davis's literate, hallucinatory novels are like high-style comic strips: every page brims with action, but the pathos is real and the cliffhangers end with actual falls.

Before You Sleep, by Linn Ullmann, translated from the Norwegian by Tiina Nunnally (Viking; $23.95). Karin is the Pippi Longstocking of sexual predators, a swaggering narrator who seduces men to prove how awful they are. At her sister Julie's wedding, near Oslo, she determines that she will sleep with a certain guest—and does—watching with satisfaction as he guiltily kisses his wife afterward. Karin tells us her mother was "irresistible," but that her husband left her anyway; that an aunt was ditched for the aunt's sister; and that Julie's husband will be unfaithful. While this could be yet another long complaint about men's deficiencies in love, it is also a story of family secrets, surprisingly pleasing tall tales, and unexpected tenderness.

All Tomorrow's Parties, by William Gibson (Putnam; $24.95). A tubercular derelict who is also a world-class hacker is cruising the datasphere from inside a cardboard box in a Tokyo train station when he detects in the pattern of worldwide information flow "the mother of all nodal points." Somehow, a down-on-his-luck rent-a-cop, a vérité filmmaker, a virtual Japanese goddess, an autistic Latino child fascinated by watches, a nameless assassin, and a mysterious public-relations billionaire are all connected. In this not quite sequel, characters from Gibson's last two books, "Idoru" and "Virtual Light," converge upon the twenty-first-century shantytown occupying the Golden Gate Bridge to confront something momentous—though what, exactly, remains shimmeringly elusive. The pleasure is less in the plot, however, than in Gibson's coolly elegant prose, which creates a future that looks like Simon Rodia's Watts Towers: a science fiction constructed from glittering, broken artifacts of the present.

The Desperate Season, by Michael Blaine (Weisbach/Morrow; $24). "The highlight here is watching the headwaters of the Van Deusen River trickle under a bridge behind the Grand Union parking lot," nineteen-year-old Maurice Coleman says of his faded Catskills town. But Maurice, who is schizophrenic, is about to liven things up by taking his own family hostage. The author keeps the narrative tension steady throughout, jumping back and forth in time and shifting points of view. When Maurice uncovers the lies of a broken marriage, the effect is as jolting as the sporadic bursts of fire from his cheap semi-automatic.

Twinship, by Laurie Foos (Harcourt Brace; $23). In Foos's third and funniest novel, genes run amok when Maxi Dublin, a breeder of champion Persian cats, somehow manages to give birth to a clone of herself. But that's not all that's awry in the family circle: Maxi's mom, Minnie, kidnaps the RGC, or Rapidly Growing Clone, and goes on the lam. Soon Maxi is endeavoring to find herself, quite literally, as she scours the Eastern Seaboard in the company of baleful nine-year-old twins and a Fergie imitator. In a story that is more parable than satire, Foos irreverently recasts the familiar: a woman who wants to be a child but has one instead.

Pu-239 and Other Russian Fantasies, by Ken Kalfus (Milkweed; $22). Kalfus is a New York native whose experience of Russia was chiefly derived from a four-year stint in Moscow, but the stories in this collection—which are told entirely from the Russian point of view—linger in the mind long after their novelty wears off. A literary hack becomes hopelessly infatuated with a dissident writer; young radicals hatch doomed plans to establish a Jewish republic; a dying nuclear technician hawks weapons-grade plutonium on Moscow's black market. A few easy pieces (about Stalin's death, or love in war-torn Chechnya) miss their mark and sink to the level of cultural or literary cliché, but at his best Kalfus comes remarkably close to capturing the hidden pleasures and brutal paradoxes of a land where a people and their politics clash more often, and more violently, than either can bear.

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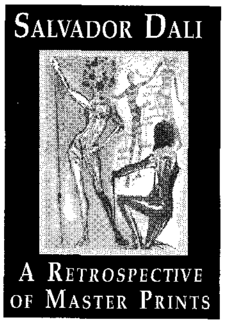
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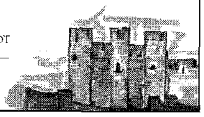

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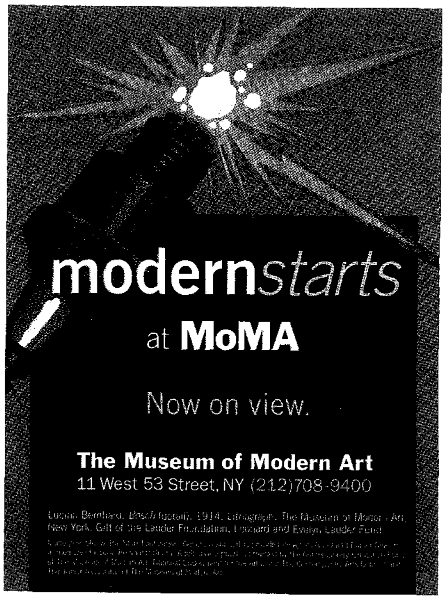
serenity from his own ontology—the sense of himself as a bit of star matter ready for dispersal into the universe.

More than once, Sagan remarked that he felt he had been born at precisely the right historical moment, just in time for adult participation in humankind's first interplanetary forays, but his passing seems both premature and inopportune. In the three years since his death, the SETI quest has resumed, with researchers having access to newer, more sensitive equipment. And various NASA probes (Lunar Prospector, Galileo, and Pathfinder) have suggested evidence of water—that exobiological elixir—on our own moon, beneath the surface of Jupiter's moon Europa, and even on Mars. "The most radical feature of the new antediluvian Mars, which few dared to propose before, is *rain,"* Poundstone writes. "It's hard to explain conglomerates [fused pebbles] without conceding precipitation and the mythopoetic Mars of Sagan." If the work of Pathfinder (now officially renamed the Sagan Memorial Station) remains "poorly known to the public," that's because, Poundstone argues, Sagan isn't around to popularize it.

The astronomer did live to see what he called, in one of his last essays, the "epochal discovery" of a planetary system around the pulsar star B 1257 + 12. But he missed the sudden profusion of confirmed planet detections: the on-line "Extrasolar Planets Encyclopaedia" now lists thirty-two planets or brown dwarfs around main-sequence stars. With the number set to grow exponentially, extraterrestrial intelligence may soon seem inevitable, and the Drake equation more like Newtonian law.

THE urge to escape may turn out to be one of the new century's strongest impulses. Now that Everyman is wired up for instant, constant communication, he may soon experience his own planet as a kind of stalled elevator, with E-mail and cellular chatter providing the unstoppable Muzak. Psychologically overcrowded, he may be more eager to get away than he ever was during the long-ago push to the moon. Formerly, even scientific colleagues who were generally sympathetic to Sagan's more outré suggestions tended to cringe at his musings on interstellar flight, an



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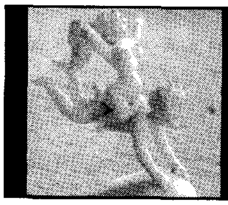

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undertaking for which we hardly have the bone mass, life span, or fuel. But these days NASA itself is encouraging a small Breakthrough Propulsion Physics Program, which is devoted to solving problems surrounding "vacuum fluctuation energy, warp drives and wormholes, and superluminal quantum effects." The project argues, in a Saganesque formulation, that "a *genuinely* new, credible idea is likely to *appear* non-credible."

Davidson claims that the NASA administrator Dan Goldin began to look approvingly on "paper studies" of interstellar robotic flight after reading Sagan's 1994 book "Pale Blue Dot," which includes a series of planetary photographs—Venus, Earth, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune—all taken on Valentine's Day, 1990, by Voyager 1. Sagan persuaded NASA to turn the spacecraft around for a parting glance, just before it left the solar system with its anthology of Earth sounds and images. The results are humbling, and thrilling—a reminder, courtesy of a difficult, outward-looking man, that the cosmos is a two-way street, and that, when all is said and done, you can even get here from there. ♦

THE CURRENT CINEMA

THE MOTHER OF US ALL

Almodóvar's women; Burton's Sleepy Hollow; Malkovich's head.

BY DAVID DENBY

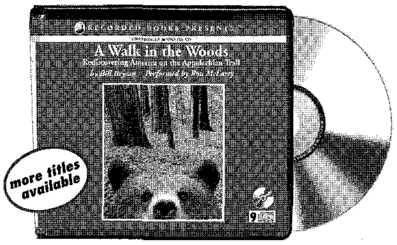
PEDRO ALMODÓVAR, the good bad boy of Spanish cinema, has long made us cherish his flamboyant, passion-fruit world of homosexuals, transvestites, transsexuals, and fierce and hungry women—inflamed lovers prancing on high heels. Almodóvar's sensibility draws on different kinds of excess: the old-Hollywood emotional extravagance of great actresses like Bette Davis; the "Latin temperament" at its most imperious and fitful; the assorted confusions and comedies of cross-dressing and sex change. In his best movies, "Law of Desire" and "Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown," Almodóvar combined comedy and sex and put a liberating charge into farce. Amazed by his generosity to his characters, we gratefully accepted his gay-cabaret approach to identity—accepted it as a form of love. "All I have that is real is my feelings," says a transvestite whore, much improved by silicone, in Almodóvar's latest film, and that sentiment might also be the director's motto. In his hands, the world took on new colors, physically as well as morally: bright reds and blues replaced natural tones, and the hues of artifice and imposture drove out commonplace sincerity or filtered it into art. What he wanted was not actuality but erotic fable—people held together by passion and loyalty. What he hadn't prepared us for, however, was the possibility that he would do one of his fables, so to speak, straight—that is, not as perfervid farce but as soap opera. In "All About My Mother," which Almodóvar has called a "screwball drama," the situations are mad and the plotting is abrupt and arbitrary, but the treatment is matter-of-fact, even sombre. Almodóvar is trying for new seriousness. He has been overtaken not by fear but by—of all things—a desire for dignity.

Manuela (Cecilia Roth), a reformed whore, loses her teen-age son in a car accident, and goes in search of the boy's father, who knows nothing of his son's existence. She doesn't find him—at least, not at first—but in Barcelona she falls in with an old friend, a transvestite prostitute (Antonia San Juan), and then with a great actress (Marisa Paredes) and her young lover (Candela Peña), who are playing, respectively, Blanche DuBois and Stella in a production of "A Streetcar Named Desire." The movie is fashioned as a tribute to actresses who play actresses, but this specialized skill is offered as a metaphor for the general situation of women, who, it is implied, can create life in the shadow of men only through deceit, manipulation, and role-playing. Like Thelma Ritter in "All About Eve," Manuela works in the dressing room of the great actress, and, like Anne Baxter in the same movie, she replaces one of the stars onstage. But Manuela also "acts" the role of mother. Miserable over the loss of her son, she renews herself by taking into her apartment a beautiful young nun (Penélope Cruz) who has been knocked up by the same man who, seventeen years earlier, got Manuela herself pregnant. The movie is full of symmetries and reflecting mirrors—theatre as life, life as theatre—but Almodóvar wheels the pieces into place without the gleeful excitement he has shown in the past, when the coincidences were so deliriously abundant that they seemed to be teasing the very idea of coherent storytelling. This time, everything feels a little perfunctory, even pat. The protagonist may be part of the problem: Manuela, a practical and hardheaded woman, doesn't seem to belong in the same story with dirty-mouthed hustlers who have both penises and breasts, and with volatile actresses forever falling to pieces. By adding this common-sense person, this *mother*, Almodóvar has, oddly, undermined his world of high-torque dreamers who live by feelings alone.

Pedro Almodóvar's new film is a tribute to actresses who play actresses. Photograph by Firooz Zahedi.

"All About My Mother" is a testament to the strength of women, who provide comfort and love, as mothers or as whores; the men in the story either die or have breast implants and become "women" who offer pleasure to other men as hustlers. There's no longer any way—even a bad way—of being a man in Almodóvar's world. The movie is at its best in the scenes of live-wire teasing and solidarity among the women, but there's a sadness in "All About My Mother" that goes beyond the pall produced by the death of the heroine's son. Except for a scene here and there, the movie lacks spirit. The transvestite Agrado, who says her feelings are the only thing real about her, also says, standing before an audience, "A woman is more authentic the more she looks like what she has dreamed for herself." But the dream Agrado speaks of—that is, the dream of living at the bright edge of theatrical extremes—seems to be coming to an end.

THROUGH a good part of the redundant length of Tim Burton's "Sleepy Hollow," we seem to be watching the same magnificent shots of a headless horseman riding a black steed through the darkened woods. This enraged demon is seen from the front, from the back, and from the side. He is photographed rearing up, with billowing cape, and then ad-



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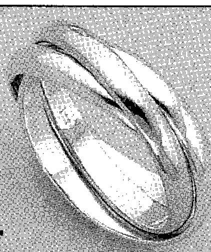

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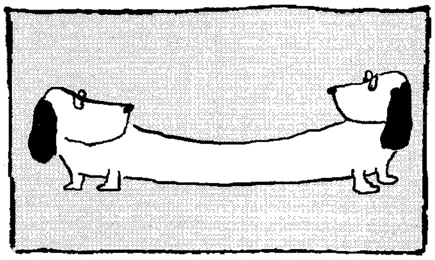
vancing at a gallop onto a terrified victim and swinging his blade: more heads roll in this two-hour film than rolled in the Place de la Concorde throughout the entire Terror. The black-caped horseman storming headless out of the woods is an amazing image, and I can't blame Burton for showing it again and again; I blame him for not making a more involving movie around a great visual idea.

It's not that the rest of "Sleepy Hollow" isn't beautifully designed. It is. In this version of Washington Irving's tale, the town of Sleepy Hollow lies under a curse. The light is invariably a chill gray, and foul mists, like a spreading poison, envelop the streets and houses. Burton and his cinematographer, Emmanuel Lubezki, seem to have set themselves a curious expressive problem: How dark can they make the images before the movie becomes unreadable by an audience not composed exclusively of cats, bats, and owls? Very, very dark. But, like any stylized look without sufficient human interest, the atmosphere of "Sleepy Hollow" grows monotonous. Johnny Depp is a prissy and squeamish Ichabod Crane, a rationalist seeker after the truth; Depp is charming but weightless. The other characters—the men with frock coats and wigs and pale, pinched faces, the women in Empire-style gowns with squeezed-together exposed breasts—make a stunning first impression. They could be caricatures in an old book of illustrated fairy tales. But then they start talking gibberish, and we lose interest. Like so many horror movies that are overloaded with climaxes, "Sleepy Hollow" issues its secrets in the midst of furious action, where the secrets mean little or nothing. Tim Burton, the director of "Beetlejuice" and of the first two "Batman" movies, seems in his recent films to have lost the ability to make an emotional connection with the audience. In "Sleepy Hollow," he substitutes references to earlier movies for drama, as if he thought that recapitulating tropes from "Frankenstein" or old Hammer Horror films were the way to be an artist. But



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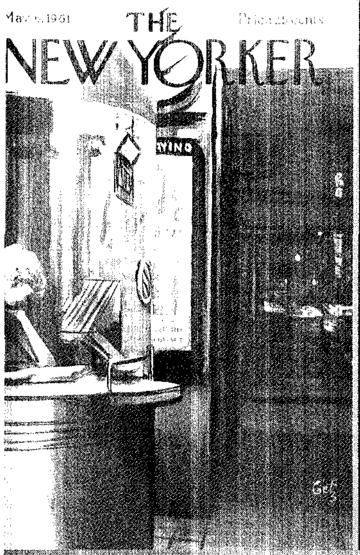

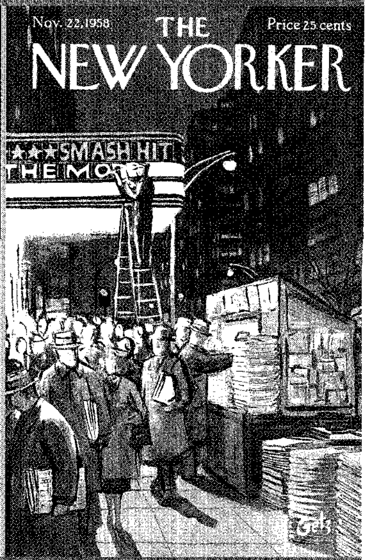

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see the movie anyway: see it if you crave the shivery thrills of black on black; or if you've ever wanted to cut off someone's head or wanted your own cut off.

INVENTION and audacity are rare in American movies, and I am therefore grateful for "Being John Malkovich," though I wish the movie amounted to more than it does. This comedy-fantasia, written by Charlie Kaufman and directed by the up-from-MTV creator Spike Jonze, would be unimaginable without the presence of Malkovich, an actor whose insolent, silken self-possession has long fascinated movie- and theatre-goers. Imperviousness is Malkovich's dominant spiritual quality, so it's exceptionally satisfying to see him inhabited, possessed, and forced to do spastic riffs equal to Steve Martin's in "All of Me," when Lily Tomlin was inside *him*. The people taking possession of Malkovich include an out-of-work puppeteer (John Cusack), his animal-loving wife (Cameron Diaz), and a cynical office worker (Catherine Keener), each of whom enters Malkovich's head and remains for fifteen minutes at a time, experiencing everything he does, before being deposited with a whoosh onto the mucky wastes alongside the New Jersey Turnpike. The movie is literally a head trip, but without the druggy and mystical overtones that would have clogged the free play of wit a quarter century ago. Jonze works in a refreshingly deadpan, anti-surreal style: even such oddities as an office with ceilings so low that everyone must stoop are presented without fuss. In the first hour, there are many bright moments, and when Malkovich enters his own head the filmmakers produce an episode of excruciating self-recognition: a restaurant filled with many Malkoviches, some young, some old, some female, some dwarfish. It's a nightmare of the actor as innumerable personae. The picture goes off, I think, when it begins playing sexual-identity games, and the two women, one inside Malkovich, one outside, use his body to make love to one another. The fiction becomes increasingly arbitrary and presumptuous; as a fantasia it hangs together, I guess, but its intricate structure doesn't mean much, and critics who have discovered profundities about "postmodern identity" in it should reclaim control of their own heads before it's too late. ♦

Suzanne Farrell coaches Christina Fagundes in Balanchine's "Meditation."

HENRY LEUTWYLER

DANCING

THE HAPPY FEW

Where the lessons of Balanchine are still alive.

BY JOAN ACOCELLA

HOWEVER New York City Ballet, founded by George Balanchine, is doing with his work (often, miserably), several other companies, not founded by him, are doing very well. Last month, Miami City Ballet brought to Newark's New Jersey Performing Arts Center three Balanchine ballets, including the evening-length "Jewels," and suddenly we saw again the thing that N.Y.C.B. had in the past and doesn't have in the present—that shivering hyper-aliveness. You look at it, and your hair stands on end.

Edward Villella, the founder-director of Miami City Ballet, was America's first homegrown male ballet star. In his years with New York City Ballet (1957-1979), Villella was especially beloved because, raised in Queens, he had a "street" quality, and a pronounced virility, that people were glad to see in classical dancing, and that gave them leave to like it. In a way, he was to American ballet, or its male division, what Jackson Pollock was to American painting in the mid-century. More important for his later career, his dance training was interrupted. (His father made him go to college.) He had to kill himself to catch up, and as a result he never took ballet technique, or Balanchine's version of it, for granted. You can read this in the Miami dancers. They are strong and natural and hungry, as he was. But the crucial thing is their phras-

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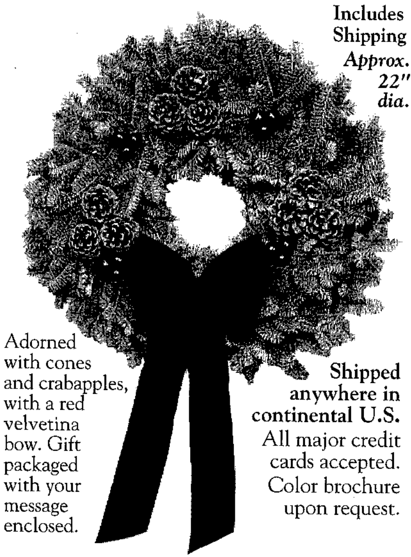

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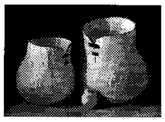

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ing, the way they place the steps on the music. A bold, spontaneous musicality: this is the lesson that Balanchine so strenuously taught. It was N.Y.C.B.'s glory during Villella's years there, and he has transferred it to his own, young company.

Villella has also had the humility to recognize that he and his staff cannot teach everything. As part of the process of staging "Jewels," he hired the people on whom Balanchine had made this ballet—Violette Verdy for the "Emeralds" section, Patricia McBride for "Rubies" (where she was partnered by Villella), Suzanne Farrell for "Diamonds"—to come and coach his dancers. Their lessons have been passed down to later casts. Mary Carmen Catoya, who led "Emeralds" in Newark, was not trained in the Balanchine technique. She arrived here only a few months ago from her native Venezuela, where, as in most of Latin America, they teach a more presentational, stand-and-sing kind of ballet. Could have fooled me. What I saw was Catoya diving into the music, riding its currents, then teasing them, opposing them, playing with them, as Verdy so unforgettably did in the original production.

And Catoya wasn't the only one. In Balanchine's 1955 "Glinka Pas de Trois," a little, old-fashioned showpiece full of finicky steps, three young people, Lenaig Guegan, Callye Andra Robinson, and Bernard Courtot de Bouteiller, worked with music as jazzmen work with each other—relaxed, spontaneous, this-time-only—meanwhile doing such things as failli-into-fourth-position-croisé-into-sissone-en-tournant.

The company also brought its "Prodigal Son," and though this was not as good as the other two Balanchine stagings—its leads, Franklin Gamero and Iliana Lopez, *are* classic Latin-American dancers: end-stopped, positiony—it was touching to see how much the company put into the piece, and particularly the male corps, the Revellers, the goons who strip the Prodigal of his inheritance. In many companies the Revellers do this in a jumble of undifferentiated grotesquerie. Miami's Revellers do it with specificity: this one wagging his fingers, that one in splits, another one doing something else to let

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you know how happy he is to have made off with the Prodigal's wine jug, or how he wishes he had got something better.

Two weeks after Miami danced in Newark, Suzanne Farrell opened a mostly Balanchine season, with sixteen handpicked dancers, at the Kennedy Center, in Washington. (The show will move to the New Victory in New York on November 18th.) Farrell's years at New York City Ballet, 1961-69 and 1975-89, overlapped with Villella's, but the two almost never danced together, for they were very different. He was human; she was not. Farrell had a noumenal quality that, together with her astonishing virtuosity, set her apart from all other dancers. As her career wound down, there was talk of getting her to teach, but no, people said, Farrell couldn't teach, because her art was too personal to her. We all accepted this. It seemed right. Does Secretariat teach other horses how to run? (The tradition in ballet, as in most arts, has been that it is the non-great performers—Balanchine himself, for example—who grow up to be the great teachers.) Then, in 1989, the Kirov Ballet brought to New York a Balanchine piece, "Scotch Symphony," that Farrell had taught them, and it was splendid. In 1995, she staged two all-Balanchine programs at the Kennedy Center, and they were more splendid, in the same way—above all, in the achievement of the lead dancers. It is one thing to galvanize a ballet company, turn it into an artistic instrument. This is what Villella has been able to do, together with other N.Y.C.B. veterans: Helgi Tomasson at San Francisco Ballet, Francia Russell and Kent Stowell at Pacific Northwest Ballet, in Seattle. It is another thing, also necessary if a company wants to be world-class, to create stars. That has not really happened yet in Miami, San Francisco, or Seattle, but it happens, or starts to, every time Suzanne Farrell gets off a train and walks into a ballet studio.

Included in her new program is a historical curiosity, "Meditation." Balanchine made this piece for Farrell in 1963, when he (aged fifty-nine) fell in love with her (aged eighteen). It shows a man being visited by a kind of spirit, a woman who embraces him, consoles him, and of course leaves him, after

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having delivered the most amazing off-center multiple pirouettes you have ever seen. As Farrell told us in a little pre-performance speech at the Kennedy Center, "Meditation" was a prophecy: "Ultimately, it became my life." (That is, though she left Balanchine—she married someone else—she has since spent her life as a ministering spirit to his work.) With so much personal cargo, "Meditation" was never danced by any woman but Farrell; after she stopped performing it, the ballet disappeared from repertory. But for the Kennedy Center season she revived it, and the dancer she put in her place was Christina Fagundes, lately of American Ballet Theatre. How Farrell chose Fagundes is a mystery. For as long as I've watched her, Fagundes has been the opposite of noumenal: the down-to-earth dancer, the cancan dancer. But she is strong; she can do those pirouettes. And Farrell may have taken it as a challenge to convert this jolly wench into a moonbeam. If so, she succeeded. Fagundes never stopped being herself, but she found something new in herself—some hope or fantasy, or maybe just the pleasure of getting a romantic role at last—and for seven brief minutes she danced at heaven's gate.

A similar thing happened to Philip Neal in Farrell's staging of "Apollo." Neal, a principal at N.Y.C.B., is a beautiful dancer but a narcissistic one. Whatever ballet he's in, he always seems to be thinking about something else—his hair, maybe. Suddenly, under Farrell's direction, he sweated, he worked, he thought about Apollo. What does she do to these people? Does she pray with them, or send them to therapy? I don't know, but she turns them into artists.

The rest of Farrell's program was not as interesting, but she is a freelancer, taking what she can get. Her show was mounted on too small a stage, with recorded music, and, for the most part, with dancers not advanced enough to be working with her. By rights, she should be the régisseur of the Balanchine repertory at New York City Ballet. Not only is she not that; in 1993, N.Y.C.B.'s head, Peter Martins—who, unlike Villella, apparently does not want people of great authority around him—dismissed her from the little staff position that she had at the company after she retired from dancing. (Nor, except on rare occasions, had Martins asked her to do any work in that position.) The situation is absurd. More than any other troupe, N.Y.C.B., because of its huge legacy of Balanchine ballets, needs stars. Farrell is a star-maker. Yet the two don't meet.

Not everyone outside City Ballet is doing a terrific job with Balanchine's work—for example, Dance Theatre of Harlem, under Arthur Mitchell, another N.Y.C.B. alumnus. In 1969, following the death of Martin Luther King, Jr., Mitchell set up his own company, with Balanchine's help, in order to plant the seed of classical dance in New York's black community. Community is very important to ballet. The vivaciousness of Miami City Ballet may well have something to do with the number of Latin dancers in the company, and the fact that they are playing to a heavily Latin audience. Likewise, it is no surprise that D.T.H.'s dancing is exceptionally vivid, go-for-broke. This is a tradition among black dancers—they do not hold back. (Look at the Alvin Ailey company.) But at D.T.H. these days, and especially in the Balanchine repertory, that extroversion is starting to look like hard sell. Every second, the dancers are grinning at you, almost waving at you. You can't get them to shut up and dance. In D.T.H.'s "Prodigal Son," during the Siren's seduction solo, you're not allowed to concentrate on her, because the man playing the Prodigal, the otherwise excellent Duncan Cooper, is so busy giving you his reaction shots, his

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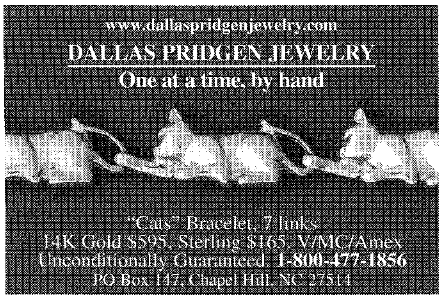
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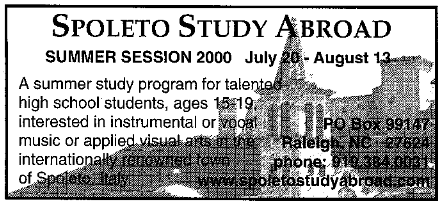
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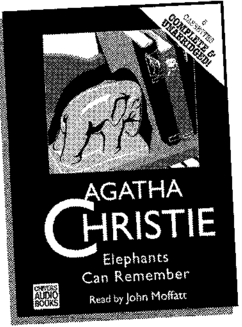

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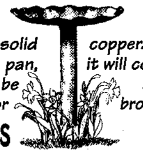

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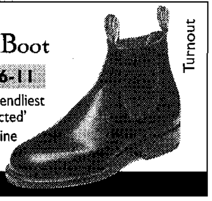

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hundred-and-one facial expressions, his arms flung wide to let you know what a babe he thinks the Siren is. It wouldn't be so bad if the D.T.H. dancers could actually manage Balanchine's style, but their dancing tends to be short-phrased—this step, then this step—in direct opposition to Balanchine's insistence on the long phrase, the movement that keeps on going.

You can say one thing for D.T.H., though: they clearly *like* Balanchine. His ballets thrill them. You see the same excitement in Farrell's shows, and those of the Miami, San Francisco, and Seattle troupes. Indeed, you can find it in the recently published "Suki Schorer on Balanchine Technique" (Knopf; $40), wherein Schorer, a long-time instructor at N.Y.C.B.'s affiliated School of American Ballet, takes us through Balanchine's teachings on how to plié, how to point the foot, and so on. Strange, that a manual of ballet technique should be a page-turner, but this one is, because Schorer so relishes the intricacies of Balanchine's approach, gives the reasons, and also tells us the little things he said in class—on coming down from jumps: "No noise! Like bird landing on eggs"—to stamp in his lessons.

Since his death, there has been a lot of talk about the "morality" of Balanchine's work, a great emphasis on how he taught us what to live for, and what life means. I think he did teach those things, but too much insistence on them quickly becomes tedious, not to speak of pious. Also, it scares the dancers, makes them feel they can't cut the mustard. (This may be part of the problem at N.Y.C.B.) I'm not sure, anyway, that Balanchine taught us all how to live. What he did was make us happy. I remember, after N.Y.C.B. performances in the old days, watching people literally jump up and down on the subway platform. To say that this was just happiness may seem small praise, but whatever the metaphysics of his work, they came to us first as joy. And who else, year after year, produced joy six nights a week for thousands of people? For Balanchine, that took a lifetime's work. For his dancers, it took their youth, and for some of them it is now the task of their adulthood. ◆

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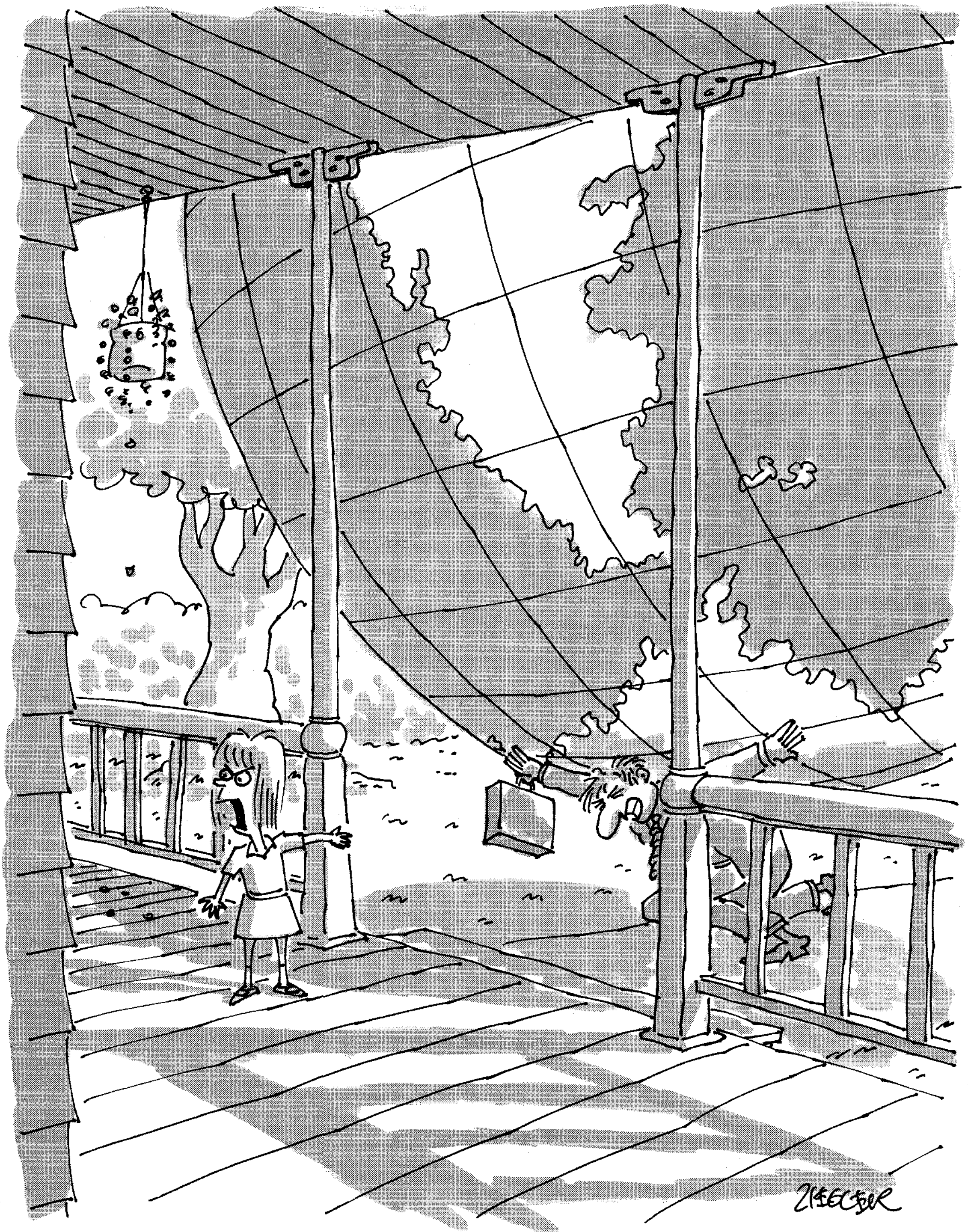
THE BACK PAGE

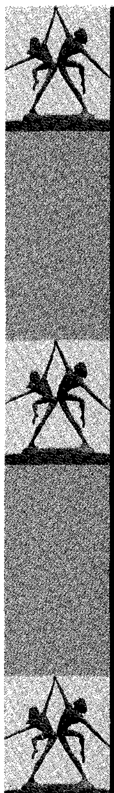
THE CARTOON CAPTION CONTEST

This drawing, by Jack Ziegler, is just a funny caption short of eliciting the appreciative chuckle that would make it a cartoon. "Mom, Dad forgot the pizza!" is one line that this perturbed porch urchin might be imagined to be uttering. You, surely, can do better. Here's your chance to be a cartoonist—or, at least, half of one—and a shot at being published in *The New Yorker.*



YOUR CAPTION HERE: ______________________________

The rules of the Cartoon Caption Contest are simple. Who can enter? Anyone who's a U.S. resident, except employees of the Condé Nast Publications and their families. How to enter: Send in one, and only one, legible caption, along with your name, phone number, and address, to Cartoon Caption Contest, c/o The Cartoon Bank, 145 Palisade Street, Suite 373, Dobbs Ferry, New York 10522, or by E-mail to toon@cartoonbank.com (please write "caption contest" in the subject heading). Entries must be received by January 7, 2000. Within two weeks of the entry deadline, the winning caption will be chosen. The prize: The winner's name and caption will be published with the cartoon in a future issue of *The New Yorker.* Important: Entries not chosen for the prize will be neither acknowledged nor returned. No purchase necessary. Void where prohibited. The winner must sign an affidavit of eligibility. The winner must also agree to (a) allow the Cartoon Bank to represent and license the cartoon with the winner's caption in any and all media in perpetuity throughout the world without additional consideration, and (b) allow the Cartoon Bank to use the winner's name for editorial, advertising, and publicity purposes. Odds of winning depend on three things: how many people enter, how funny they are, and how funny you are.



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